

A
PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
SETTLEMENTS AND TRADE
OF THE
EUROPEANS
IN THE
EAST AND WEST INDIES.

By the ABBÉ RAYNAL,

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE REVOLUTION OF AMERICA.
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A NEW TRANSLATION.

LARGE ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS,
AND A COPIOUS INDEX.

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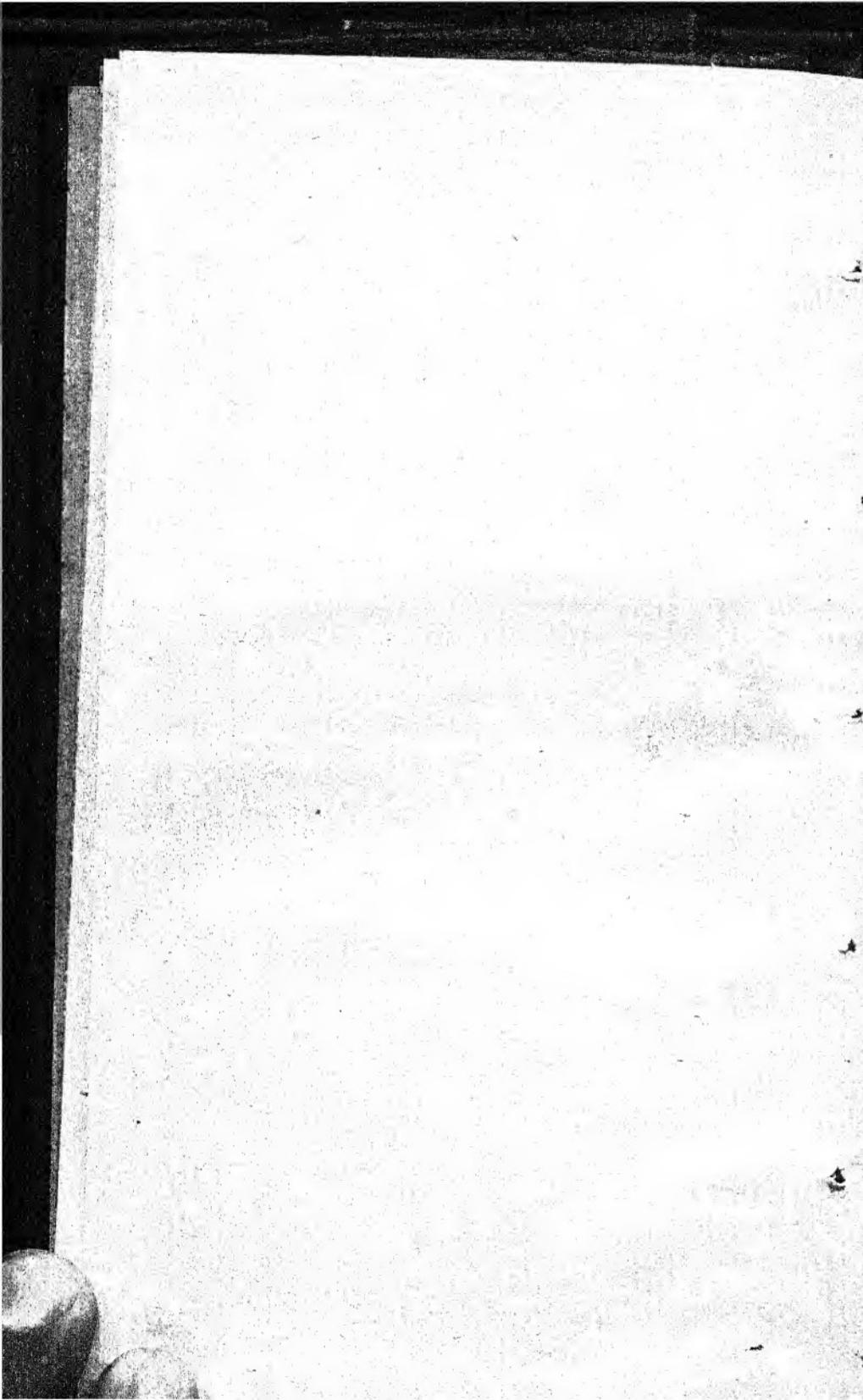
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BOOK IV.

*Voyages, Settlements, Wars, and Trade of the French in
the East Indies.*

THE ancient Gauls, almost always at war with each other, had no other intercourse but such as might be supposed to take place among savage nations, whose wants are always very few. Their connections abroad were still more circumscribed. Some navigators from Vannes carried earthen ware to Great Britain, which they bartered there for dogs, slaves, pewter, and furs. Such of these articles as they could not dispose of in their own country, were conveyed to Marseilles, and there exchanged for wines, stuffs, and spice, which were brought thither by merchants from Italy or Greece.

Ancient revolutions of commerce in France.
This kind of traffic was not carried on by all the Gauls. From Caesar's account, it would appear, that the inhabitants of Belgia had prohibited the importation of all foreign commodities, as tending to corrupt their morals. They

thought their own soil sufficiently fruitful to answer all their wants. The police of the Celtic and Aquitanian Gauls was not so strict. In order to be in a situation to purchase those foreign commodities which they could be supplied with from the Mediterranean, a passion for which daily increased, this people applied themselves closely to a kind of labour which they had never thought of before; they picked up with great care all the gold dust that was brought down with the sand along the streams of several of their rivers.

Though the Romans had neither a turn for trade, nor held it in any kind of estimation, it necessarily increased in Gaul, after they had subdued, and in some measure civilized it. Sea-ports were opened at Arles, Narbonne, Bordeaux, and other places. Magnificent roads were every where made, the ruins of which we still behold with astonishment. Every navigable river had its company of merchants, to whom considerable privileges were granted, and who, under the general denomination of *Nautæ*, were the agents and springs of a general circulation.

This rising spirit was checked by the incursions of the Franks and other barbarous nations; nor was it restored to its former activity, even when these robbers had established themselves in their conquests. To their savage fury succeeded an unbounded passion for wealth, to gratify which, they had recourse to every kind of oppression. Every boat that came to a town was to pay so much for entrance, so much for the salute, so much for the bridge, so much for approaching the shore, so much for anchorage, so much for leave to unload, and so much for the store-room *. Land carriages were not more favourably treated

* Merchants were obliged to pay besides, five or six other taxes, before they were allowed to expose to sale what they had brought to market. Discouraged by these abuses, they preferred inactivity to inevitable ruin; in consequence of which, there was a total stagnation of trade.

In order to open again the sources of commerce, they instituted fairs in the eleventh century. These were annual or periodical markets, where merchants enjoyed a great many privileges and immunities, which were confined to certain times and places. This usage began at St Denis, and soon spread throughout the rest of the kingdom.

treated, and were exposed to the insufferable tyranny of custom-house officers, who were dispersed all over the country. These excesses were carried so far, that sometimes the goods brought to market did not fetch enough to pay the preliminary expences. A total discouragement was the necessary consequence of such enormities.

Cloisters soon became the only places where industry prevailed, and manufactures were carried on. The monks were not then corrupted by idleness, intrigue, and debauchery. Useful labours filled up the vacancies of an edifying and retired life. The most humble and robust of them shared the toils of agriculture with their servants. Those to whom nature hath imparted less strength, or more understanding, applied themselves to the cultivation of the forlorn and abandoned arts. All of them, in silence and retirement, were engaged in the service of their country, whose substance their successors have incessantly devoured, and disturbed its tranquillity.

Dagobert roused a little the spirit of his countrymen in the seventh century. Fairs were presently opened, to which the Saxons flocked with tin and lead from England; the Jews with jewels, and gold or silver plate; the Sclavonians with all the metals of the north; traders from Lombardy, Provence, and Spain, with the commodities of their respective countries, and those they received from Africa, Egypt, and Syria; and merchants of every province in the kingdom, with whatever their soil and their industry afforded. Unfortunately this prosperity was of a

A 2 short

The little vigour which this expedient, bad in itself, but useful in its consequences, had given to trade, was again destroyed by calamities of all kinds, with which the whole state was afflicted almost without interruption. Barbarity was perpetuated, and sometimes increased, by every revolution. At last Lewis XI. whose evil genius happily could not do an injury to individuals, but what eventually tended to the public good, humbled the Grandees, who had shared the kingdom among themselves, and gave vigour to the laws.

The people being delivered from the dominion of their petty tyrants, and protected by their sovereign, discovered both activity and industry during the reigns of Lewis XII. and Francis I. The manufactures of the nation made some progress; and her corns, her wines, her oils, and her brandies, were in request, and imported into all the countries of Europe.

short duration ; it disappeared under indolent kings, but revived under Charlemagne.

That prince, who might without flattery be ranked with the greatest men recorded in history, had he not been sometimes influenced by sanguinary schemes of conquest, and filled with acts of persecution and tyranny, seemed to follow the footsteps of those first Romans, who made rural labours a relaxation from the fatigues of war. He applied himself to the care of his vast domains, with that closeness and attention which would hardly be expected from the most assiduous man in a private station. All the great men of the state followed his example, and devoted themselves to husbandry, and to these arts which attend, or are immediately connected with it. From that period the French had plenty of their own productions to barter, and could with great ease make them circulate throughout the immense empire which was then subject to their dominion.

So flourishing a situation presented a fresh allurement to the Normans to indulge the inclination they had for piracy. Those barbarians, accustomed to seek from plunder that wealth which their soil did not afford, poured out of their inhospitable climate in quest of booty. They fell upon all the sea-coasts, but most eagerly upon those of France, which promised the richest harvest. The ravages they committed, the cruelties they exercised, the flames they kindled, for a whole century, in those fertile provinces, cannot be remembred without horror. During that fatal period, they thought of nothing but how to escape slavery or death. There was no communication between the nations, and consequently no trade.

In the mean time, the nobles intrusted with the administration of the provinces, had insensibly made themselves masters of them, and had found means to make their authority hereditary. They had not, indeed, thrown off all dependence on the head of the empire ; but, under the modest appellation of *vassals*, they were not much less formidable to the state than the king in the neighbourhood of its frontiers. They were confirmed in their usurpations at the memorable æra when the sceptre was removed from the family of Charlemagne to that of the Capets. From that time there were no more national assemblies,

femblies, no tribunals, no laws, no government. In that fatal confusion, the sword usurped the place of justice, and the free citizens were forced to embrace servitude, to purchase the protection of a chief who was able to defend them.

Commerce could not possibly thrive under the fetters of slavery, and in the midst of the continual disturbances occasioned by the most cruel anarchy. Industry is the child of peace ; nothing depresses it so much as servitude. Genius languishes when it is not animated by hope and emulation ; and neither of these can subsist where there is no property. Nothing is a stronger recommendation of liberty, or more fully proves the rights of mankind, than the impossibility of working with success to enrich barbarous masters.

Several of the kings of France entertained some suspicion of this important truth ; they attempted to check the power of these petty tyrants, who, by ruining their unfortunate vassals, kept up the calamities of monarchy. St Lewis was the first who introduced trade into the system of government. Before his time it was only the operation of chance and of circumstances. He brought it under the regulation of stated laws, and he himself drew up statutes, which have served as a model for those that have since been enacted.

These first steps led the way to measures of great importance. The old law, which forbade the exportation of all productions of the kingdom, was still in force, and agriculture was discouraged by this absurd prohibition. This wise monarch removed these fatal impediments ; expecting, not without reason, that a free exportation would restore to the nation those treasures which his imprudent expedition to Asia had lavished.

Some political events seconded these salutary views. Before the reign of St Lewis, the kings had but few ports on the ocean, and none on the Mediterranean. The northern coasts were divided between the Counts of Flanders and the Dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, and Bretagne ; the rest belonged to the English. The southern coasts were possessed by the Counts of Toulouse, and the Kings of Majorca, Arragon, and Castile. By this partition, the inland provinces had little or no communica-

tion with the foreign markets. The union of the county of Toulouse with the crown removed this great obstacle, at least for that part of the French territory.

Philip the son of St Lewis, desirous of improving this kind of conquest, endeavoured to draw to Nismes, a city under his jurisdiction, part of the trade carried on at Montpellier, which belonged to the King of Arragon. The privileges he granted produced the desired effect; but he soon found it to be an object of small importance. The Italians supplied the kingdom with spices, perfumes, silks, and all the rich stuffs of the East. The arts had not made such progress in France as to enable them to afford their own manufactures in exchange; and the produce of agriculture was not sufficient to defray so many articles of luxury. So dear a consumption could only be supported by ready money, and there was but little in the kingdom, especially since the Crusades, though France was not so poor as most of the other European nations.

Philip, surnamed le Bel, was sensible of these truths; he found means to improve agriculture, so as to answer the demands of foreign importations; and these he reduced, by establishing new manufactures, and improving the old ones. Under this reign the ministry undertook, for the first time, to guide the hand of the artist, and to direct his labours. The breadth, the quality, and the dressing of the cloths was fixed; the exportation of wool was prohibited, which the neighbouring nations came to purchase, in order to manufacture it. These were the best measures that could be taken in those times of ignorance.

Since that period, the arts advanced in their progress, in proportion to the decay of feudal tyranny. The French, however, did not begin to form their taste till the time of their expeditions into Italy. They were dazzled with a thousand new objects that presented themselves at Genoa, Venice, and Florence. The strictness observed by Anne of Bretagne, under the reigns of Charles VIII. and Lewis XII. at first restrained the conquerors from giving full scope to their propensity for imitation; but no sooner had Francis I. called up the women to court, no sooner had Catherine of Medicis crossed the Alps, than the great affected an elegance unknown since the first foundation of the monarchy. The whole nation was led by this alluring

alluring example of luxury and the improvement of manufactures was the natural consequence.

From Henry II. to Henry IV. the civil wars, the unhappy divisions about religion, the ignorance of government, the spirit of finance which began to have its influence in the council, the barbarous and devouring avarice of men in business, encouraged by the protection they enjoyed; all these several causes retarded the progress of industry, but could never destroy it. It revived with fresh splendour under the frugal administration of Sully. It was almost extinguished under those of Richelieu and Mazarine, both governed by the farmers of the revenue *; the one wholly taken up with his ambition for empire and his spirit of revenge, the other with intrigue and plunder.

No king of France had ever seriously considered the advantages that might accrue from a trade to India, nor had the emulation of the French been roused by the lustre which other nations derived from it. They consumed more eastern productions than any other nation; they were as favourably situated for bringing them from the first hand; and yet they were content to pay to foreign industry what their own might have shared.

Some merchants of Rouen had ventured, indeed, in 1535, upon a small armament; but Genouville, who commanded the expedition, met with violent storms at the Cape of Good Hope, was cast upon unknown lands, and with much difficulty got back to Europe.

In 1601, a society formed in Bretagne, fitted out two ships, to endeavour to get a share, if possible, of the riches of the East, which the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch, were contending for. Pyrard, who commanded these ships, arrived at the Maldivia islands, and did not return to his own country till after an unfortunate navigation of ten years.

A new company, headed by one Girard, a native of Flanders,

* The former was wholly engaged in war, and in a scheme to establish order in the kingdom by violent measures; the other, more covetous than intelligent in the means to enrich the State, favoured abuses of all kinds, because he made them subservient to augment his private fortune.

Flanders, fitted out some ships from Normandy for the island of Java, in 1616 and 1619. They returned with cargoes sufficient to indemnify the adventurers, but not enough to encourage them to any fresh undertakings.

Captain Reginon, upon the expiration of this fruitless grant in 1633, prevailed upon some merchants of Dieppe, two years after, to enter upon a tract which might be productive of great riches, if properly pursued. Fortune baffled the endeavours of the new adventurers. The only advantage gained by these repeated expeditions was the high opinion that was conceived of the island of Madagascar, discovered by the Portuguese in 1506.

This gave rise to a company in 1642, which was to make a considerable settlement on that island, to secure to their ships the necessary helps for sailing further.

*Settlement of
the French at
Madagascar.
Description of
that island.*

Upon a survey of the island, it was found to be situated along the eastern coast of Africa; that it was three hundred and thirty-six leagues long, and one hundred and twenty broad in the widest part, and about eight hundred in circumference. By whatever wind a ship is brought there, nothing but dreary and barren sands are to be seen; but, at a greater distance from the shore, the soil is sometimes black, sometimes reddish, mostly fruitful, and every where watered by a great number of rivers. Vegetation is here very quick, and requires little labour; nature produces rice, potatoes, bananas, pineapples, indigo, hemp, cotton, silk, sugar, palm-trees, cocoa-trees, orange-trees, gum-trees, and timber fit for building, and for every art. The pastures are excellent, and are covered with oxen of the largest kind, and sheep exactly resembling those of Barbary.

The island of Madagascar is divided into a great many provinces; each of them has a chief called Dina, which answers to the word Lord. All the ensigns of his dignity, are his slaves and his flocks. His place is hereditary; but, in default of heirs, it devolves upon the oldest of his delegates. His counsel is composed of such magistrates as he makes choice of; and the rest, which is the greatest number, reside in the villages to preserve peace, and administer justice. He can neither declare war without their consent,

consent, nor support it without the voluntary contributions and actual assistance of his people.

Such is the general form of government in that island; the province of Anossi alone differs from it, having been possessed by the Arabs for several centuries past. Though few in number, they soon became the strongest, and divided the country into twenty-two districts, each of which had a master of their own nation, to whom they gave the name of *Boandrian*, or *descendant of Abraham*. These petty sovereigns are continually at war with each other, but never fail to unite against the other princes of Madagascar, who hold them in detestation, as being foreigners and usurpers. This is, of all the island, that part which is the most destitute of morals, activity, industry, and bravery, because it is the only one where there is no liberty.

Some of the French, settled at Fort Dauphin in the country of Anossi, have lately in their excursions, discovered a new race of men, called Kimos, the tallest of whom are not above four feet high. They inhabit about forty villages in the inland parts, on the north-west side of the island. They are said to be more mischievous than their neighbours, and, what appears very extraordinary, not so cowardly. They never stir out of their mountains, nor suffer any one to penetrate into them.

The other inhabitants of Madagascar are tall, nimble, and of a haughty countenance. They will conceal a deep design, or a strong passion, under a smiling face, as artfully as a knave in a civilized nation. They are ignorant of the origin of their laws, but observe them with great uniformity. The old men, who are entrusted with the care of enforcing them, never take any fee for the trial of a criminal, and think themselves sufficiently rewarded if they can rid their country of a malefactor. In civil causes, the parties bring them so many head of cattle, in proportion to the importance of the affair.

The offence that is most frequently brought before these magistrates, is theft. Though it is customary to bore the hand of the thief, these people have a universal propensity to robbery. The inhabitants, ever afraid for their property, live in continual mistrust of each other. For their mutual security they seal their engagement with

with the most solemn oaths. They are so accustomed to these formalities, that they practise them even when they treat with Europeans. On these important occasions, he who represents the nation, puts into a vessel filled with brandy, gold, silver, gun flint, if possible some of the dust of the tomb of his ancestors, and frequently blood, which, after the manner of the ancient Scythians, the parties draw out of their own arms by incision. During these preparatives, their weapons are laid on the ground in the form of a cross. Soon after, both parties pick them up, and hold them with the point in the cup, constantly stirring the contents till the agreement is made. Then the contracting parties, the witnesses, and the spectators, all drink out of the cup till it is empty. After which, they embrace and withdraw.

Religious principles are no check upon the people of Madagascar. Though in general they admit the prevailing doctrine of the two principles, they have but a confused notion of it, nor have they any worship whatever. Notwithstanding this indifference, they are addicted to every kind of superstition. In their uncouth notions of astrology, they see nothing, nor imagine any thing, but what they connect with futurity.

The most dangerous of all their prejudices is, doubtless, the distinction between lucky and unlucky days. They inhumanly put to death all children born under the unlucky days. This destructive principle is one cause, among many others, which prevents the population of this country.

Those who do not fall victims to this cruel superstition are circumcised at the age of two years, or twenty-four moons, as they express it. The ceremony is performed with all possible solemnity. While the operation is performing, one of the child's parents holds a cup under the sacred knife of the priest, or physician; and the most distinguished of the uncles swallows the part of the prepuce that has been cut off. The rest of the family, and the by-standers, dip a finger into the blood, and taste it. These singular mysteries are concluded with festivity, dancing, and pleasures of all kinds.

The people of Madagascar never receive any kind of education, and marry as soon as they attain to the state of manhood.

manhood. A man of the lower sort, even a slave, takes as many wives as he pleases, or as many as he can find. The better sort have but one lawful wife, but, in order to vary their pleasures, they keep concubines. They all put away their wives whenever they dislike them, and both parties are at full liberty to marry again, or to remain single.

The people of Madagascar lead an idle and dissolute life, and seldom arrive at old age. An unwholesome climate, bad food, constant debauchery, the want of proper assistance, together with other causes, concur to hasten their end. When a man of rank dies, the whole neighbourhood is apprized of it by lamentations, expressed in an incessant mournful singing. The relations meet, and partake of the most profuse entertainments, whilst the most affectionate of the slaves keeps asking the deceased, "What could induce him to quit all that was dear to him?" After eight days, the corpse is buried with his choicest jewels; nor is he then forgotten. The respect for ancestors is incredible in those barbarous regions. It is no uncommon thing to see men of all ages go and weep over the tombs of their fathers, and ask their advice in the most important occurrences of life.

The common food of the inhabitants of Madagascar is rice, which multiplies a hundred fold, in spite of the worst of culture *. Their drink is a kind of mead, and wine made

* Experience has proved, that corn, as well as rice, will grow at Madagascar. The French cultivated it formerly towards the southern point of the island, where they had built Fort Dauphin. Fine ears of wheat are to be found there at this day, which falling again into the earth when ripe, reproduce themselves annually without culture, and grow irregularly among the grass natural to the country.

There is not perhaps, in the whole world, a country where necessaries are cheaper during the time of harvest. The inhabitants, who never think on the future, and whose desires are very violent, will then give for a bit of blue cloth, or the most trifling things, a very great quantity of rice. After this dissipation of their crops, they have nothing more to give away, frequently not even wherewithal to live upon. In many provinces, we may see them seeking, during one half of the year, their subsistence in the midst of the woods.

The favourite drink of these savages is a kind of mead, made
of

made with sugar and banana. Their greatest finery is a piece of cloth over their shoulders, and another round their waist.

Madagascar has been visited by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English, who, finding none of those objects which brought them to the East, despised it. The French, who seemed to have no determinate object in view, spent that capital they had reserved for the purpose of trade, in subduing the island. Having found some gold scattered in one corner of the island, they immediately concluded there must be gold mines, never suspecting that it might have been brought thitherby the Arabs; and they were punished for their greediness by the loss of their whole stock. At the expiration of their grant, they had nothing left but a few tenements, situated in five or six different parts of the coast, built of boards covered with leaves, surrounded with stakes, and decorated with the pompous name of forts, because they mounted a few bad pieces of cannon. Their defenders were reduced to about a hundred robbers, who, by their cruelties, daily increased the hatred conceived against their nation. The whole of their conquests amounted to a few small districts, forsaken by the natives, and some few larger cantons, from whence they forcibly extorted a tribute of provisions.

Marshal de la Meilleraie seized upon these ruins, and conceived the project of restoring this ill-conducted undertaking for his own private emolument. His success was so different, that his property sold but for 20,000 livres *, which was full as much as it was worth.

At last, in 1664, Colbert presented to Lewis XIV. a plan

of water and honey boiled together. In the same manner they make wine of sugar and banana. The former is very spirituous; the latter pleasant, but without strength.

The inhabitants of this island make cloth, and carpets of cotton, which they dye many colours. They have no looms, but, spreading out their threads on the ground, they warp them with other threads by the help of small sticks, which they lift up and let down by turns. Their most sumptuous dress consists of a piece of cloth upon their shoulders and another about their waist. The common people wear nothing usually but a girdle or belt, which covers but very indifferently that which modesty forbids to discover.

* 875 l.

plan for an East India Company. Agriculture was at that time so flourishing in France, and industry so brisk, that this branch of commerce seemed to be needless. The minister was of a different opinion. He foresaw that the other European nations would follow his example, and set up manufactures of their own, and would have their Eastern connections besides. This was considered as a very deep thought, and an East India Company was accordingly created, vested with all the privileges enjoyed by the Dutch East India Company. They even went further: Colbert, considering that, in order to carry on great commercial undertakings, there must always be a certain confidence in republics which cannot be expected in monarchies, had recourse to every expedient that could produce it.

The charter was granted for fifty years, that the Company might be encouraged to form great settlements, with a prospect of reaping the fruits of them.

All foreigners advancing 20,000 livres *, were to be deemed Frenchmen without being naturalized.

On the like terms, officers, whatever corps they belonged to, were excused from residence, without forfeiting their post or their pay.

Whatever was wanted for the building, arming, or victualling of the ships, was to be entered duty free, and exempted from all duties to the admiralty.

The government engaged to pay fifty livres + per ton for all goods exported from France to India, and seventy-five livres † for every ton imported from thence.

The government entered into engagements to convoy their outward and homeward bound ships with as strong a squadron as circumstances should require.

The reigning passion of the nation was made subservient to this establishment §. Special honours and hereditary titles were promised to such as should distinguish themselves in the service of the Company.

As trade was yet in its infancy in France, and was

* 875 l.

+ 2l. 3s. 9d.

† 3l. 5s. 7*id.*

§ The government took upon themselves all the losses which the Company should make for the first ten years. They kept their word, and this engagement cost them four millions.

unable to furnish the fifteen millions * that were to constitute the stock of the new society, the ministry engaged to lend as far as three millions †. The nobles, the magistrates, men of every rank, were invited to share the rest. The nation, proud to please their king, who had not yet crushed them with the weight of his false greatness, came into the proposal with great eagerness.

The persisting in the resolution of forming a settlement at Madagascar deprived the Company of the benefit of the first voyage. They were at length obliged to relinquish that Island, whose savage and unconquerable inhabitants could not be reconciled either to the commodities, the worship, or the manners of Europe.

At that period it was that the Company's ships began to sail directly to India. By the intrigues of Marcara, a native of Ispahan, but in the French service, they obtained leave to establish factories on several places on the coast of Peninsula. They even attempted to secure a share of the Japan trade. Colbert offered to send none but Protestants; but, by the artifices of the Dutch, the French were denied an entrance into that empire, as the English had been before.

*The French
make Surat the
center of their
trade.*

SURAT had been pitched upon for the center of all the business which the Company were to carry on in India. It was from that capital of Guzarat that all orders were to be issued out for the sularian settlements. There all goods destined for Europe were to be brought.

*Account of the
famous city of Su-
rat and of the pro-
vince of Guzarat,
in which it is si-
tuated.*

GUZARAT forms a peninsula between the Indus and Malabar. It is about one hundred and sixty miles in length, and much the same in breadth. It is separated from the kingdom of Agra by the mountains of Maiva. It rains there incessantly from June to September; at all other times the sky is so clear that scarce a cloud is to be seen. The burning heat of the sun, however, is happily tempered by refreshing dews, which cool the air, and moisten the ground. The richness of

a soil

* 656,350L.

† 131,250L.

a soil abounding in corn, rice, sugar, cotton, cattle, game, fruits of all kinds in an uninterrupted succession, added to variety of important manufactures, was sufficient for the happiness of the inhabitants, when, in the beginning of the eighth century, strangers came and introduced new branches of industry among them.

Some Persians, who were persecuted for their opinions by the Saracens their conquerors, took refuge in the isle of Ormus, whence they sailed some time after for India, and landed at Diu. In this asylum they continued but nineteen years, and then embarked again. They were driven by the winds upon a pleasant shore between Daman and Bacaim. The Prince who governed that country consented to admit them amongst his subjects, on condition that they should reveal the mysteries of their belief, that they should lay down their arms, that they should speak the Indian language, that their women should go abroad unveiled, and that they should celebrate their nuptials at the close of the evening, according to the custom of the country. As these stipulations contained nothing repugnant to their religious notions, these refugees agreed to them. A piece of ground was allotted them, where they built a town, whence they soon spread further up the country.

A happy necessity had made them contract a habit of labour, so that both the lands and manufactures prospered in their hands. They were so wise as not to interfere with government or war, and enjoyed profound tranquillity in the midst of all the revolutions that happened from time to time. In consequence of this circumspection, and of the affluence in which they lived, they multiplied very fast. They always remained a separate people, distinguished by the name of Parsis, never intermarrying with the Indians, and adhering to the principles which had occasioned their banishment. Their tenets were those of Zoroaster, somewhat altered by time, ignorance, and the rapaciousness of the priests.

The prosperity of Guzarat, which was partly owing to the exiled Persians, excited the ambition of two formidable powers. Whilst the Portuguese annoyed it on the sea side by the ravages they committed, by the victories they gained, and by the conquest of Diu, justly

esteemed the bulwark of the kingdom, the Moguls, already masters of the north of India, and eager to advance towards the southern parts, where trade and riches were to be found, threatened it from the continent.

Badur, a Patan by birth, who then reigned over Guzarat, saw the impossibility of withstanding two such enemies, both bent upon his destruction. He thought he had less to fear from a people whose forces were parted from their dominions by immense seas, than from a nation firmly settled on the frontiers of his provinces. This consideration made him determine to be friends with the Portuguese. The concessions he made them even induced them to join with him against Akebar, whose activity and courage they dreaded little less than himself.

This alliance disconcerted men who thought they had only Indians to deal with. They could not think of engaging with Europeans, who were reputed invincible. The natives, not yet recovered from the consternation into which these conquerors had thrown them, represented them to the Mogul soldiers as men come down from heaven, or risen from the waters, of a species infinitely superior to the Asiatics, and far surpassing them in valour, genius, and knowledge. The army, seized with a panic, was urging the generals to march back to Delhi, when Akebar, convinced that a prince who undertakes a great conquest must command his own troops, hastened to his camp. He did not hesitate to assure his troops that they should beat a people enervated by luxury, riches, pleasures, and the heat of the climate; and that the glory of purging Asia of that handful of banditti was reserved for them. The army, in fresh spirits, applauded the Emperor, and marched on with confidence. They soon came to an engagement; the Portuguese, ill seconded by their allies, were surrounded and cut to pieces. Badur fled, and disappeared for ever. All the cities of Guzarat hastened to open their gates to the conqueror. This fine kingdom, in 1565, became a province of that vast empire which was soon to invade all Indostan.

Under the Mogul government, which was then in its full glory, Guzarat enjoyed more tranquillity than before. The manufactures were multiplied at Cambaya, Amadabat, Broitschia, and several other places. New ones were

set up in those towns which were yet unacquainted with this species of industry. The culture of lands was improved, and their productions increased. The part of Malabar which borders upon Guzarat, long since tired of the impositions of the Portuguese, brought their linen cloths thither. The goods manufactured on the banks of the Indus were likewise sent to this country, as they could not conveniently be conveyed down the river, as the stream is too rapid above to land them, and below, the waters discharge into the sea by so many streams, that they are in a manner lost in the sands.

All these riches centered at Surat, which stands on the river Tapta, a few miles from the ocean. This city was indebted for this advantage to a fort which protected the merchants, and to its harbour, the best on that coast, though not an excellent one. The Moguls, who had then no other maritime town, drew all their articles of luxury from thence; and the Europeans, who had not yet any of the great settlements they have since made at Bengal, and on the coast of Coromandel, bought most of their Indian commodities at that place. They were all collected there, as the people of Surat had taken care to procure a navy superior to that of their neighbours.

Their ships, which lasted for ages, were for the most part of a thousand or twelve hundred tons burthen. They were built of a very strong wood called *Teak*. Far from launching them with a costly apparatus and complicated engines, they let in the tide into the dock, and it set them afloat. The cordage was made of the bark of the cocoa-tree, and though rougher and less pliable than ours, was at least as solid. Their cotton sails were neither so strong nor so lasting as our hempen ones, but more pliable, and less apt to split. Instead of pitch, they made use of the gum of a tree called *Damar*, which is, perhaps, better. The skill of their officers, though but moderate, was sufficient for those seas and those seasons in which they sailed. As to their sailors, called Lascars, the Europeans have found them good ones for their voyages from one part of India to another. They have even been employed successfully in bringing home into our stormy latitude such ships as had lost their crews.

So many united advantages had brought to Surat a

great concourse of Moguls, Indians, Persians, Arabs, Armenians, Jews, and Europeans. We hardly suspected that there was such a thing as commercial principles, yet they were already known and practised in this part of Asia. The value of money was very low, and it was easily obtained; and bills of exchange might be had for every market in India. Insurances for the most distant navigations were much in vogue. Such was the honesty of these traders, that bags of money ticketed and sealed by the bankers would circulate for years, without ever being counted or weighed. Fortunes were proportionable to the ease with which they were to be acquired by industry. Those of five or six millions* were not uncommon, and some were even more considerable.

These fortunes were mostly possessed by the Banians, a set of traders who were noted for their honesty †. A few moments were enough for them to transact the most important business. In the most intricate discussions, they preserved an evenness of temper, and a politeness which can hardly be conceived.

Their children, who assisted at all barginings, were early trained up to this gentleness of manners. Scarce had they a dawning of reason, but they were initiated into all the mysteries of trade. It was a common thing to see a child of ten or twelve years old able to supply his father's place. What a contrast, what a difference between this and the education of our children; and yet, what a difference between the attainments of the Indians, and the progress of our knowledge!

Such

* About 240,000*l.* on an average.

† A set of Indians devoted entirely to commerce. They were distinguished by the openness and integrity they observed in their dealings. In half an hour, they would conclude bargains for many millions, with a good faith which was hardly elsewhere to be met with. Their readiness to run the risks of trade became a proverb. Their natural coolness of temper gave them a great advantage in their transactions. Whether they were offered much below the value of their goods, or challenged for depreciating those of others, nothing discomposed them. They suffered this intoxication to evaporate, as they called it, when it was over; they coolly renewed their proposals; and, if they abated any thing, it was not on account of the noise that was made about it, but solely for the advantage they found in having a transaction concluded.

Such of the Banians as had Abyssinian slaves, and very few of these good-natured men had any, treated them with such humanity as must appear very singular to us. They brought them up, as if they had been of their own family, trained them to business, advanced them money to enable them to trade for themselves, and not only suffered them to enjoy the profits, but even allowed them to dispose of them in favour of their descendants, if they had any.

The expences of the Banians were not proportioned to their fortunes. As they were restrained by the principles of their religion from eating meat or drinking strong liquors, they lived upon fruits, and a few plain dishes. They never departed from this frugality but upon the settlement of their children. On this single occasion, no cost was spared for the entertainment, or for the music, dancing, and fire-works. Their whole ambition was to tell how much the wedding had cost. Sometimes it amounted to a hundred thousand crowns*.

Their very women had a taste for this simplicity of manners. All their glory consisted in pleasing their husbands. Perhaps, the great veneration in which they held the nuptial tie arose from the custom of engaging them in their earliest infancy. That sentiment was in their opinion the most sacred part of religion. Never did they allow themselves the least conversation with strangers. Less reserve would not have satisfied their husbands, who could not hear, without astonishment, of the familiarity that prevailed between the two sexes in Europe. When they were told that this freedom was attended with no ill consequence, they would not believe it, but shook their heads, and answered by one of their proverbs, which signifies, *That if you bring butter too near the fire, you can hardly keep it from melting.*

Excepting the Moguls, who were in possession of all places under the government, who were very extravagant in their stables, their baths, and their seraglios, and ran into every kind of indulgence to drown the sense of the despotism under which they lived, all the merchants of Surat conformed to the frugality of the Banians, as far as the

* 13,125 L.

the difference of religion would admit. Their greatest expence was the embellishment of their houses.

These were constructed in the best manner to guard against the heat of the climate. The outside walls were covered with beautiful wainscoting, and the inside ones inlaid with porcelain. The panes of their windows were of shell or mother of pearl, which tempered the glare of the sun without too much obstructing the light. The apartments were prettily disposed and furnished, suitably to the customs of the country ; and in one of the rooms was a fountain of water, spouting up from a marble basin, whose gentle murmurs invited the company to soft slumbers.

During their repose, the common indulgence of the inhabitants of Surat was to stretch themselves upon a sopha, where they were rubbed by men of singular dexterity, or rather kneaded like dough. The necessity of promoting the circulation of the fluids, too often retarded by the heat of the climate, first suggested the notion of this operation, which affords them an infinite variety of delightful sensations. They fall into such a tender state of langour, that they sometimes almost faint away. This custom was said to be brought to the Indies from China ; and some epigrams of Martial, and declamations of Seneca, seem to hint that it was not unknown to the Romans at the time when they refined upon every pleasure, as the tyrants who enslaved those masters of the world afterwards refined upon every torture.

They had another species of pleasure at Surat, which perhaps our effeminacy would have envied them still more, and this was their female dancers, whom the Europeans call Balliaderes, a name given them by the Portuguese*.

Numbers of these are collected together in seminaries of pleasure. The better sort of these societies are devoted to the richest and most frequented Pagodas. Their destination is to dance in the temples on their great festivals, and to be subservient to the pleasures of the Bramins. These priests, who have not taken the artful and deceitful

* All that the mythologists and poets have feigned as enchanting concerning the nymphs and priestesses of Venus, which renders the worship of that deity so celebrated in antiquity, is to be found realized among the Balliaderes of Surat.

deceitful vow of renouncing all, that they may the more freely partake of every enjoyment, chuse rather to have women of their own, than at once to defile celibacy and wedlock. They do not invade another man's right by adultery, but are jealous of the dancers, whose worship and vows they share with the gods; so that they never suffer them, without reluctance, to contribute to the amusement of kings and great men*.

The rise of this singular institution is not known. Probably, one Bramin who had a concubine or a wife, associated with another Bramin, who had likewise his concubine or his wife; and, in process of time, the mixture of so many Bramins and women occasioned such confusion, that the women came to be common to all those priests. Let but a number of single persons of both sexes be collected into one cloister, and a commonality of men and women will soon take place.

This freedom, we may suppose, put an end to jealousy. The women were not uneasy at the increase of their numbers, nor the Bramins at that of their order. It was rather a new conquest than a rivalry.

We may likewise suppose, that, in order to palliate this licentiousness in the eyes of the people, all those women were consecrated to the service of the altars. It is no less probable that the people readily consented to this kind of superstition, as by confining the lawless desires of the monks to one particular spot, it insured the safety of their wives and daughters.

The contrivance of stamping a sacred character upon these courtesans, might make parents the more willing to part with their beautiful daughters, and to consent that they should follow their calling, and devote themselves to these seminaries, from whence the supererogated women might return to society without disgrace; for there is no crime that may not be sanctified by the intervention of the gods. The most sacred truths may be perverted by wicked men to the worst of purposes. The very

* Doubtless they are of opinion that love, that pure and celestial incense of beauty, would be but profaned in those hearts, where all is venality and lewdness, and where even the prostitution of every principle of honour often paves the way to the most honourable stations.

very notion of a Supreme Being may, 'in the hands of a crafty priest, be made subversive of all morality. He will affirm, not that such a thing is pleasing to the gods, because it is good; but that such a thing is good, because it is pleasing to the gods.'

The Bramins wanted only to gain another point, in order to complete this institution, which was to persuade the people that it was decent, holy, and pleasing to the gods, to marry a Balliadere, in preference to all other women; and thereby induce them to solicit the relics of their debaucheries as a special favour.

In every city there are other companies, not so choice as the former, for the amusement of the rich. The Moors and Gentiles may equally procure a sight of these dancers at their country houses, or in their public assemblies. There are even strolling companies of them, conducted by old women, who having been themselves trained up in these seminaries, are promoted in time to the direction of them *.

These handsome girls have the shocking custom of being always followed by an old deformed musician, perhaps as a foil, whose employment is to beat time with an instrument of brass, which we have lately borrowed
of

* By way of contrast, whimsical enough, but the effect of which is shocking, these girls always carry along with them some hireling musicians, a set of vile and deformed monsters, disgraceful to nature. These have tabarins, cymbals, and fifes, with which they perform concerts, not very agreeable indeed, but abundantly regular. These airs, however, give life to the pantomimes, the subject of which is commonly an amorous intrigue. Love displays, in these ballets, all her charms, and artfully suits them to the taste of the spectators whom the Balladières wish to enamour.

These female dancers pay very little regard to modesty, even in public, but without exposing any nudity. In private, their licentiousness is under less restraint. By the lascivious looks and wanton postures of these priestesses, full of the deity who inspires them, the contagion of enthusiasm and passion, with which they are inflamed, is conveyed to all the senses, which they instantaneously set in motion. It is indeed no longer a passion; it is an electric fire, which is communicated from one single body to all the bodies that surround it; it is a fire still more subtle than that visible spark, causing an universal tremour in the organs, and a general commotion in all the members of the assembly.

f the Turks, to add to our military music, and which in India is called a *tam*. The man who holds it is continually repeating that word with such vehemence, that by degrees he works himself up into dreadful convulsions, whilst the Balliaderes, intoxicated with the desire of pleasing, and the sweets with which they are perfumed, at length lose their senses.

Their dances are, almost all of them, love pantomimes; the plan, the design, the attitudes, the time, the airs, the cadence, are all expressive of this passion, with all its raptures and extravagancies.

Every thing conspires to the amazing success of these voluptuous women; the art and richness of their attire, as well as their ingenuity in setting off their beauty. Their long black hair falling over their shoulders, or braided and turned up, is loaded with diamonds and stuck with flowers. Their necklaces and bracelets are enriched with precious stones. Even their nose jewels, that ornament which shocks us at first sight, is wonderfully pleasing; it sets off all the other ornaments by the charms of symmetry, and has an effect which cannot be explained, but is felt in time.

Nothing can equal the care they take to preserve their breasts as one of the most striking marks of their beauty. To prevent them from growing large or ill-shaped, they inclose them in two cases made of an exceeding light wood, which are joined together, and buckled behind. These cases are so smooth, and so supple, that they give way to the various attitudes of the body, without being flattened, and without injuring the delicacy of the skin. The outside of these cases is covered with a leaf of gold, studded with diamonds. This is certainly the most refined kind of ornament, and the best calculated to preserve beauty. They take it off, and put it on again with singular facility. This covering does not prevent one from seeing the palpitations, sighings, and tender emotions of the breast; it conceals nothing that can contribute to excite desire.

Most of these dancers think it an addition to the beauty of their complexion, and the impression of their looks, to trace a black circle round their eyes with a hair bodkin, dipped in the powder of antimony. This borrowed beauty,

beauty, celebrated by all the eastern poets, appeared very odd at first to the Europeans, but custom has reconciled them to it.

This art of pleasing is the whole life, the whole employment, the whole felicity of the Balliaderes. It is hard to resist their seducing manners. They even obtain a preference over those beauties of Cassimere, which fill the seraglios of Indostan, as the fair Georgians and Circassians fill those of Ispahan and Constantinople. The modesty, or rather the reserve of proud slaves, sequestered from the society of men, cannot balance the arts of these expert courtesans.

They were no where so much in repute as at Surat, the richest and most populous city in India. It began to decline in 1664. It was sacked by the famous Sevagi, who carried off twenty-five or thirty millions *. The plunder would have been infinitely greater, had not the English and Dutch escaped the public disaster, by the care they had taken to fortify their factories, and had not the most valuable effects been lodged in the castle, which was out of the reach of attack. This loss made the inhabitants more cautious. They surrounded the city with walls, to prevent the like disaster. The mischief was repaired, when the English, in 1686, were so unwarrantably and shamefully greedy, as to stop all the ships that were sending out from Surat to the several seas. This piracy, which lasted three years, deprived this famous market of almost every branch of trade that was not its own peculiar property. The town was nearly reduced to its own natural riches.

Other pirates have since infested those latitudes, and from time to time disturbed the operations of Surat. Their very caravans, that carried their merchandizes to Agra, to Delhi, and all over the empire, were not respected by the subjects of the independent rajas, which they met with on the several roads. They had formerly had recourse to a strange contrivance for the security of their caravans, which was, to put them under the protection of a woman or a child of a race held sacred by the nations they dreaded. When those banditti approached to plunder the caravan,

* About £,200,000L. at an average.

caravan, the guardian threatened to make away with herself if they persisted in their resolutions; and actually did so, if they did not yield to her remonstrances. Those profligate men, who had not been restrained out of respect for sacred blood, were excommunicated, degraded, and cast out of their tribe. The dread of these severe punishments was sometimes a check upon avarice; but, since all has been in combustion in Indostan, no consideration can allay the thirst of gold.

Notwithstanding all these misfortunes, Surat is still a great trading city. The produce of the numberless manufactures all over Guzarat is deposited in her warehouses. A great part is carried into the inland countries; the rest is conveyed to all parts of the globe by an uninterrupted navigation. The most common goods are dutties, a kind of coarse unbleached cloth, worn in Persia, Arabia, Abyssinia, and the eastern coast of Africa, and blue linens, which are disposed of in the same manner; and are likewise sold to the English and Dutch for their Guinea trade.

The blue and white checks of Cambaya, which are worn for mantles in Arabia and Turky; some are coarse and some fine, and some even mixed with gold for the wear of the rich.

The white linens of Broitschia, so well known by the name of Bafras. As they are extremely fine, they make summer caftans for the Turks and Persians. The sort of muslin, with a gold stripe at each end, with which they make their turbans, is manufactured at the same place.

The printed linens of Amadabat; whose colours are as bright, as fine, and as durable as those of Coromandel. They are worn in Persia, in Turkey, and in Europe. The rich people of Java, Sumatra, and the Molucca islands, make pagnes and coverlids of them.

The gauzes of Bairapour; the blue ones are worn by the common people in Persia and Turky for their summer clothing, and the red ones by the better sort. The Jews, who are not allowed by the Porte to wear white, make their turbans with these gauzes.

Mixed stuffs of silk and cotton, plain, striped, some with sattin stripes, some mixed with gold and silver. If they were not so dear, we should like them even in Eu-

rope for the brightness of their colours, and the fine execution of the flowers, though their patterns are so indifferent. They soon wear out; but this is of no consequence in the seraglios of Turk and Persia, where the consumption of them is made.

Some are all silk, called tapis. These are pagnes of several colours, much esteemed in the eastern parts of India. Many more would be wore, were they not under a necessity of using foreign materials, which enhances the price too much.

Shauls; very light, warm, and fine cloths, made of the wool of Caffimere. They are dyed of different colours, striped and flowered. They are worn for a winter dress in Turk, Persia, and the more temperate parts of India. With this precious wool they weave turbans, that are ell-wide, and a little more than three ells long, which sell from 2400 to 3600 livres *. Though it is sometimes manufactured at Surat, the finest works of this kind are made at Caffimere †.

Besides the prodigious quantity of cotton made use of in the manufactures of Surat, seven or eight thousand bales at least are annually sent to Bengal. Much more is sent to China, Persia, and Arabia, when the crops are very plentiful. If they are moderate, the overplus is carried down the Ganges, where it always fetches a better price.

Though Surat receives, in exchange for her exports, porcelain from China; silk from Bengal and Persia; masts and pepper from Malabar; gums, dates, dried fruits, copper, and pearls from Persia; perfumes and slaves from Arabia; great quantities of spices from the Dutch; iron, lead, cloth, cochineal, and some hard wares from the English; the balance is so much in her favour, as to bring in yearly twenty-five or twenty-six millions of livres ‡ in ready money. The profit would be much greater,

* About 130l. on an average.

† This is a delightful valley, towards the northern extremity of Indostan, formed by the mountains of Attock and those of Caucasus. It is inhabited by the most industrious and polite men of all India, and by the finest and most agreeable women.

‡ On an average about 1,116,000l.

er, if the source of the riches of the court of Delhi was not turned away.

However, this balance could never again rise to what it was when the French settled at Surat in 1668. Their leader was one Caron. He was a merchant of French extraction, who was grown old in the service of the Dutch Company. Hamilton says, that this able man, who had ingratiated himself with the Emperor of Japan, had obtained leave to build a house for his masters, on the island where the factory stood, which was under his direction. This building proved to be a castle. The natives, who knew nothing of fortification, did not entertain any suspicion of it. They surprised some pieces of cannon that were sending from Batavia, and informed the court of what was going forward. Caron was ordered to repair to Jeddah, to give an account of his conduct. As he had nothing reasonable to alledge in his vindication, he was treated with great severity and contempt. They plucked off his beard by the roots, put on him a fool's cap and coat, and in this trim exposed him to the insults of the populace, and he was banished from the empire. The reception he met with at Jaya gave him a disgust against the interests he had espoused; and, actuated by revenge, he went over to the French, and became their agent.

SURAT, where they had fixed him, did not answer his notion of a chief settlement. He disliked the situation; he lamented his being obliged to purchase his safety by submissions; he foresaw it would be a disadvantage to carry on trade in competition with richer nations, who knew more, and were held in greater esteem than themselves. He wished to find an independent port in the center of India, or in some of the Spice islands, without which he thought it impossible for any company to support itself. The Bay of Trinquimale, in the island of Ceylon, appeared to him to unite all these advantages, and he accordingly sailed for that place with a powerful squadron, which had been sent him from Europe under the command of La Haye, and which was to act under his direction. They believed, or feigned to believe,

*Attack of the
French upon the
islands of Ceylon
and St Thomas.
Their settlement
at Pondicherry.*

that they might settle there without encroaching upon the rights of the Dutch, whose property had never been acknowledged by the sovereign of the island, with whom they had entered into a treaty.

All that might indeed be true; but the event was far from being fortunate. They divulged a project which they ought to have kept a profound secret; they executed slowly an expedition which ought to have been effected at once; they were intimidated by a fleet which was not in a condition to fight, and which could not, possibly, have received orders to hazard an engagement. The greater part of the ships crews and land forces perished with want and sickness; some men were left in a small fort they had erected, where they were soon compelled to surrender. With the remainder they went to seek provisions on the coast of Coromandel; but finding none either at the Danish settlement of Tranquebar, or any where else, in a fit of despair they went and attacked St Thomas, where they were informed there was great plenty.

This town, which had long been a flourishing one, was built by the Portuguese above a hundred years before. The King of Golconda, having conquered the Carnatic, could not suffer so important a place to remain in foreign hands; he sent his generals to attack it in 1662, and they made themselves masters of it. The fortifications, though considerable, and in good repair, did not stop the progress of the French, who took them by storm in 1672. They were soon invested, and were forced to surrender two years after; because the Dutch, who were at war with Lewis XIV. joined with the Indians to expel them.

This last event would have entirely ruined the enterprise, after all the expence the government had been at to support the company, had not Martin been one of the merchants sent on board La Haye's squadron. He collected the remains of the two colonies of Ceylon and St Thomas, and with them he peopled the little town of Pondicherry, which had been lately ceded to him, and which was rising to a city, when the company conceived the fairest hopes of a new settlement, which they had now an opportunity of making in India.

Some priests belonging to the foreign missions had preached the gospel at Siam. They had gained the love of the people by their doctrine, and by their behaviour. Plain, good-natured, and humane men, without intrigue or avarice, they gave no jealousy to the government nor to the people; they had inspired them with respect and love for the French in general, and in particular for Lewis XIV.

*Settlement of
the French at
Siam. Their de-
signs on Tonquin
and Cochinchina.*

A Greek, of a restless and ambitious spirit, named Constantine Faulkon, in his travels to Siam, had been seen by the Prince, who was so much pleased with him, that in a short time he raised him to the post of prime minister, or barcalon, an office which nearly answers to our ancient Maires of the palace.

Faulkon governed both the people and the King with despotic sway. The Prince was weak, valetudinary, and had no issue. His minister conceived a project to succeed him; possibly to dethrone him. It is well known that these attempts are as easy and as frequent in despotic governments, as they are difficult and uncommon in countries where the Prince governs by the rules of justice; where the principles and measure of his authority are regulated by fundamental and immutable laws, which are under the guardianship of numerous bodies of able magistrates. There the enemies of the sovereign shew that they are enemies of the state; there they find themselves soon stopped in their project by all the forces of the nation; because, by rising up against the chief, they rise up against the laws, which are the standing and immutable will of the nation.

Faulkon contrived to make the French subservient to his scheme, as some ambitious men had formerly made use of a guard of six hundred Japanese, who had more than once disposed of the crown of Siam. He sent ambassadors into France in 1684 to make a tender of his master's alliance, and to offer sea-ports to the French merchants, and to ask for ships and troops.

The ostentatious vanity of Lewis XIV. took advantage of this embassy. The flatterers of that Prince, who was too much extolled, though he deserved commendation,

persuaded him that his fame abroad throughout the whole world entitled him to the homage of the East. He did not content himself with the enjoyment of these vain honours; he endeavoured to improve the dispositions of the king of Siam, to the benefit of the India Company, and still more of the missionaries. He sent out a squadron with more Jesuits than traders; and in the treaty which was concluded between the two kings, the French ambassadors, directed by the Jesuit Tachard, attended much more to the concerns of religion than those of commerce.

The Company still entertained great hopes of the settlement at Siam, and these hopes were not ill grounded.

That kingdom, tho' it is divided by a ridge of mountains that runs on till it meets with the rocks of Tartary, is so prodigiously fertile, that many of the cultivated lands yield two hundred to one. Some will even bear plentiful crops of rice spontaneously. That grain, left to the care of nature, sows itself again, and grows the next year, without any other culture than what the waters of the river afford, which flows all across the kingdom.

There is, perhaps, no country where fruits grow in such plenty and variety, or are so wholesome, as in this delightful spot. Some are peculiar to the country, and those which are common in other climates are much higher flavoured than any where else.

The earth, always covered with these ever-growing treasures, conceals under a very thin surface, mines of gold, copper, loadstone, iron, lead, and calin, that species of tin which is so highly esteemed all over Asia.

All these advantages are rendered useless by the most horrid despotism. A prince, corrupted by his very power, oppresses his people by his caprices, whilst he is indulging in his seraglio, or suffers them to be oppressed by his indolence. At Siam there are none but slaves, and no subjects. The men are divided into three classes; the first serve as a guard to the monarch, till his lands, and work at different trades in his palace; the second are appointed to public labours, and to the defence of the state; the last are magistrates, ministers, and the principal officers of the kingdom. No Siamese is advanced to any eminent post but he is allowed a certain number of men, who are at his

his disposal; so that the salaries annexed to great offices are well paid at the court of Siam, because they are not paid in money, but in men, who cost the prince nothing. These unfortunate people are registered at the age of sixteen. On the first summons, every one must repair to the post assigned him, upon pain of being put in irons, or condemned to the bastinado.

In a country where all the men must work for the government for six months in the year, without being paid or maintained, and the other six to earn a subsistence for the whole year; in such a country, the very lands must feel the effects of tyranny; there can be no property. Those delicious fruits that enrich the gardens of the monarch and the grandees, are not suffered to ripen in those of private men. If the soldiers who are sent out to examine the orchards, discover some choice tree, they never fail to mark it for the tyrant's table, or those of his ministers. The owner becomes the guardian of it, and is answerable for the fruit, under very severe penalties.

The men are not only slaves to men, but to the very beasts. The king of Siam keeps a great number of elephants. Those of his palace are waited upon, and treated with extraordinary honours. The meanest have fifteen slaves to attend them, who are constantly employed in gathering grafts, bananas, and sugar-canies for them. The king takes so much pride in these creatures, which are of no real use, that he rates his power rather by their number than by that of his provinces. Under pretence of feeding them well, their attendants will drive them into grounds and orchards to destroy them, unless the owners will purchase an exemption from these hardships by continual presents. No body would dare to shut his field against the king's elephants, many of whom are decorated with honourable titles, and advanced to the highest dignities in the state.

So many kinds of tyranny make the Siamese detest their native country, though they look upon it as the best upon earth; most of them flying from oppression into the forests, where they lead a savage life, infinitely preferable to that of society corrupted by despotism. So great is this desertion, that, from the port of Mergui to Juthia, the capital of the empire, you may travel for a week

week together, and not meet with the least population, through immense plains, well watered with a fine rich soil, and still bearing the marks of former culture. That fine country is now over run with tygers.

It was formerly peopled with men. Besides the natives, it was full of colonies, which came successively from all the eastern parts of Asia. Their inducement was the immense trade carried on there. All historians attest, that in the beginning of the sixteenth century, a vast number of ships came into their roads every year. That tyranny, which prevailed soon after, proved the destruction of the mines, manufactures and agriculture. With them disappeared all the foreign merchants, and even the trading part of the nation. The state fell into confusion, and consequently grew languid. The French, on their arrival, found it sunk into this state of degradation. It was in general poor, without any knowledge of the arts, and under the dominion of a despotic tyrant, who, engrossing all the trade to himself, must of course bring it to nothing. What few ornaments and articles of luxury were consumed at court, and in the houses of the great, came from Japan. The Siamese had a great regard for the Japanese, and were very fond of their work.

It was no easy matter to divert them from this attachment, and yet it was the only way of procuring a demand for the produce of French industry. If any thing could effect this change, it was the Christian religion, which the priests of the foreign missions had preached to them, and not without success; but the Jesuits, too much devoted to Faulkon, who began to be odious, abused the favour they enjoyed at court, and drew upon themselves the hatred of the people; and this odium reflected upon their religion. They built churches before there were any Christians. They founded monasteries, and, by these proceedings, disgusted the common people and the Talapoys. These are their monks; some live solitary, and some are intriguing men. They preach to the people the doctrines and precepts of Sommona Kodom. That law-giver of the Siamese was long honoured as a sage, and has since been revered as a god, or as an emanation of the Diety, a son of God. They relate a thousand wonderful stories of this man. He lived upon one grain of rice

rice a-day. He pulled out one of his eyes to give to a poor man, having nothing else to give him. Another time he gave away his wife. He commanded the stars, the rivers, and the mountains. But he had a brother, who was always thwarting his endeavours for the good of mankind. God avenged him, and crucified that unhappy brother. This fable prejudiced the Siamese against the religion of a crucified God ; and they could not revere Jesus Christ, because he died the same death as the brother of Sommona Kodom.

If the French could not carry their commodities to Siam, they could at least inspire the people with a taste for them, prepare the way for a great trade with this country, and avail themselves of that which actually offered, to open connections with all the east. The situation of that kingdom between two gulphs, where it takes up one hundred and sixty leagues of sea-coast on the one, and about two hundred on the other, would have opened the navigation of all the seas in that part of the world. The fortress of Bancocock, built at the mouth of the Menan, which had been put into the hands of the French, was an excellent market for all dealings they might have had with China, the Philippines, or any of the eastern parts of India. Mergui, the principal port of the kingdom, and one of the best in Asia, which had likewise been ceded to them, greatly promoted their trade with the coast of Coromandel, and chiefly with Bengal. It secured to them an advantageous intercourse with the kingdoms of Pegu, Ava, Aracan, and Lagos, countries still more barbarous than Siam, but where are found the finest rubies in the world, and some gold dust. All these countries, as well as Siam, produce the tree which yields that precious gum, with which the Chinese and Japanese make their varnish ; and whoever is in possession of this commodity, may be sure of carrying on a very lucrative trade with China and Japan.

Besides the advantage of coming into good settlements, which cost the company nothing, and might throw into their hands a great part of the trade of the east, they might have brought home from Siam ivory, logwood, like that which is cut in the Bay of Campeachy, a great deal of cassia, and all that quantity of Buffalo and deer

skins that the Dutch formerly brought from thence. They might have cultivated pepper there, and, possibly, other spices which were not to be found there, as they did not understand the culture of them, and because the wretched inhabitants of Siam are so indifferent to every thing, that nothing succeeds with them.

The French paid no attention to these objects. The factors of the Company, the officers, the soldiers, the Jesuits, all were ignorant of trade: Their whole attention was taken up in converting the natives, and making themselves masters of them. At last, after having given a very trifling assistance to Faulkon, at the instant when he was ready to execute his designs, they were involved in his disgrace; and the fortresses of Mergui and Bancockock, defended by French garrisons, were taken from them by the basest of all nations.

During the short time that the French were settled at Siam, the company sought to get a footing in Tonquin. They flattered themselves that they might trade safely, and to advantage, with a nation which had for ages been instructed by the Chinese. Their religion is Theism, the doctrine of Confucius, whose precepts and writings are held there in greater veneration than even in China. But there is not the same agreement as in China between the principles of government, religion, laws, opinion, rites, and ceremonies. Accordingly, though Tonquin has the same lawgiver, it is far from having the same morals. You find there neither that respect for parents, that love for the prince, those reciprocal affections, nor those social virtues, which you meet with in China; nor have they the same good order, police, industry, or activity.

This nation, which is devoted to excessive indolence, and is voluptuous without taste or delicacy, lives in continual distrust of its sovereigns and strangers. It is doubtful whether their seditious humour proceeds from a natural restlessness of temper, or whether the Chinese system of morality has instructed the people without mending the government. The improvement of knowledge, whether it ascends from the people to the government, or descends from the government to the people, should unite their assistance, otherwise it would be productive of fatal revolutions. In Tonquin, there is a constant struggle

struggle between the eunuchs who govern, and the people who impatiently bear the yoke. Every thing languishes and tends to ruin in the midst of these dissensions; and these calamities must increase, till the people have compelled their masters to grow wiser, or the masters have rendered their subjects quite insensible. The Portuguese and the Dutch, who had attempted to form some connections in Tonquin, had been forced to give them up. The French were not more successful. No Europeans have since carried on that navigation, except some few merchants of Madras, who have alternately forsaken and resumed it. They divide with the Chinese the exportation of copper and ordinary silks, the only tolerable commodities that country affords.

Cochinchina lay too near Siam not to draw the attention of the French, and they would probably have fixed there, had they had sagacity enough to foresee what degree of splendour that rising state would one day acquire. The Europeans are indebted to a philosophical traveller for what little they know with any certainty concerning that fine country. The following is the result of his observations :

When the French arrived in those distant regions, they learned that, about half a century before, a prince of Tonquin, as he was flying from his sovereign, who pursued him as a rebel, had, with his soldiers and adherents, crossed the river, which serves as a barrier between Tonquin and Cochinchina. The fugitives, who were warlike and civilized men, soon expelled the scattered inhabitants, who wandered about without any society or form of government, and had no other but that mutual interest which prompted them not to injure one another. Here they founded an empire upon the principles of culture and property. Rice was the food the most easily cultivated, and the most plentiful; upon this, therefore, the new colonists bestowed their first attention. The sea and the rivers afforded an ample provision of excellent fish, which was an inducement to inhabit their banks. They bred domestic animals, some for food, and others for labour. They cultivated the trees they were most in want of, such as the cotton for their cloathing. The mountains and forests, which could not possibly be

cultivated

cultivated, afforded wild fowl, metals, gums, perfumes, and timbers of an excellent kind. These productions proved so many materials, means, and objects of commerce. They built one hundred gallies, which are constantly employed in defending the coasts of the kingdom.

All these several advantages were well bestowed upon a people of a mild and humane disposition: a disposition which they partly owe to the women, either from the natural ascendant of beauty, or from their assiduity to labour, or from their readiness at business. In general, it is certain, that, in the first beginnings of all societies, the women are sooner civilized than the men. Their very weakness, their sedentary life, their being more taken up with a variety of lesser cares, furnish them sooner with that knowledge and experience, and incline them to those domestic attachments, which are the first promoters and strongest ties of society. This is, possibly, the reason why, in many savage nations, the women are intrusted with the administration of civil government, which is but a higher degree of domestic economy. So long as the state is but as one great family, the women are capable of undertaking the management of it. Then, undoubtedly, the people are happiest, especially in a climate where nature has left but little for man to do.

Such is the climate of Cochinchina. The people, tho' but imperfectly civilized, enjoy that happiness which might excite the envy of more improved societies. They have neither robbers, nor beggars. Every one is at liberty to live at his own house, or at his neighbour's. A traveller freely enters a houfe in any village, sits down to table, eats and drinks, without being invited or asked any questions, and then goes away without returning thanks. He is a man, and therefore a friend and relation of the family. If he is a foreigner, he will excite more curiosity, but is equally welcome.

These customs are the relics of the government of the six first kings of Cochinchina, and derived from the original contract entered into between the nation and their leader, before they crossed the river that divides Tonquin from Cochinchina. These men were weary of oppression. They dreaded the like calamity, and therefore took care to guard against the abuse of authority, which is so apt to transgres-

transgress its due limits, if not kept under some restraint. Their chief, who had set them an example of liberty, and taught them to revolt, promised them that felicity which he himself chose to enjoy ; that of a just, mild, and parental government. He cultivated with them the land in which they had taken refuge together. He never demanded any thing of them, but a yearly and voluntary supply, to enable him to defend the nation against the tyrant of Tonquin, who, for a long time, pursued them beyond the river.

This primitive contract was religiously observed for upwards of a century, under five or six successors of that brave deliverer : but at last it has been infringed. This reciprocal and solemn engagement is still renewed every year in the face of heaven and earth, in a general assembly of the whole nation, held in open air, where the oldest man presides, and where the king only assists as a private person. That prince still honours and protects agriculture, but does not, like his predecessors, set the example of labour. When he speaks of his subjects, he still says, *They are my children*; but they are no longer so. His courtiers have styled themselves his slaves, and have given him the pompous and sacrilegious title of *king of heaven*. From that moment, men must have appeared to him but as so many insects creeping on the ground. The gold which he has digged out of the mines has put a stop to agriculture. He has despised the homely roof of his ancestors, and would have a palace. Its circumference has been marked out, and comprehends a whole league. Thousands of cannon planted round the walls of this palace, make it formidable to the people. It now encloses a despotic monarch ; in a short time he will no more be seen; and this invisibility, which characterises the majesty of eastern kings, will substitute the tyrant to the father of the nation.

The discovery of gold has naturally brought on that of taxes ; and the name of administration of the finances will soon supersede that of civil legislation and social contract. Tributes are no longer free-will offerings, but extortions levied by compulsion. Designing men go to the king's palace, and craftily obtain the privilege of plundering the provinces. With gold they at once purchase

a right of committing crimes, and the privilege of impunity: they bribe the courtiers, elude the vigilance of the magistrates, and oppress the husbandmen. The traveller already sees, as he passes along, grounds lying uncultivated, and whole villages forsaken by their inhabitants. This *king of heaven*, like the gods of Epicurus carelessly suffers plagues and calamities to vex the land. He is ignorant of the sufferings and distresses of his people, who will soon fall into a state of annihilation, like the savages whose territories they now possess. All nations governed by despotism must inevitably perish in this manner. If Cochinchina relapses into that chaos out of which it emerged about a hundred and fifty years ago, it will be wholly disregarded by the navigators who now frequent its harbours. The Chinese, who carry on the principal trade there, get in exchange for their own commodities..wood for small work, and timber for building houses and ships.

An immense quantity of sugar, the raw at four livres* a-hundred weight, the white at eight †, and sugar-candy at ten ‡. Very good silk, sattins, and pitre, the fibres of a tree, not unlike the banana, which they fraudulently mix in their manufactures. Black and ordinary tea, which serves for the consumption of common people. Excellent cinnamon, which sells three or four times dearer than that of Ceylon. There is very little of it; it grows only upon one mountain, which is always surrounded with guards. Excellent pepper, and such pure iron, that they work it as it comes out of the mine, without smelting. Gold of three and twenty carats, which is found there in greater plenty than in any other part of the East. Eagle-wood, which is more or less esteemed as it is more or less resinous. The pieces that contain most of this resin are commonly taken from the heart, or from the root of the tree. They are called calunbac, and are always sold for their weight in gold to the Chinese, who account them the highest cordial in nature. They are carefully preserved in pewter-boxes, to keep them from drying. When they are to be administered, they are ground upon a marble, with such liquids as are best suited to the disorder they are intended to remove. The inferior eagle-wood,

* 3 s. 6 d.

† 7 s.

‡ 8 s. 9 d.

wood, which always sells at least a hundred livres * a-pound, is carried to Persia, Turkey, and Arabia. They use it to perfume their cloths, and sometimes their apartments, upon very particular occasions, and then they mix it with amber. It is also used for another purpose. It is a custom among those nations, when they are desirous of shewing their visitors great civilities, to present them with pipes, then with coffee and sweet-meats. When conversation begins to grow languid, the sherbet is brought in, which is considered as a hint to depart. As soon as the stranger rises to go away, they bring in a little pan with eagle-wood, and perfume his beard, sprinkling it with rose-water.

Though the French, who had scarce any thing else to bring but cloth, lead, gun-powder, and brimstone, were obliged to trade with Cochinchina chiefly in money, yet they were under a necessity of pursuing this trade in competition with the Chinese. This inconvenience might have been obviated by the profit that would have been made upon goods sent to Europe, or sold in India; but it is now too late to attempt it. Probity and honesty, the essentials of an active and solid trade, are forsaking these regions, which were formerly so flourishing, in proportion as the government becomes arbitrary, and consequently unjust. In a short time, no greater number of ships will be seen in their harbours than in those of the neighbouring states, where they were scarcely known.

However this may be, the French Company, driven from Siam, and without hopes of settling at the extremities of Asia, began to regret their factory at Surat, where they dared not appear again, since they had left it without paying their debts. They had lost the only market they knew of for their cloths, their lead, and their iron; and they were continually at a loss in the purchase of goods to answer the fancies of the mother-country, and the wants of the colonies. By fulfilling all their former engagements, they might have recovered their forfeited liberty. The Mogul government wished for a greater competition in their roads, and would have preferred the French to the English, who had purchased

courts, got acquainted with the places where the finest stuffs were manufactured, the staples where the choicest commodities were to be met with, and, in short, with all the particulars relative to the inland trade of every country.

All that Martin could do, was to lay the foundation of future success to the Company, by the good opinion he gave of the French, by the pains he took to train up agents, by the informations he procured, and by the good order he maintained in Pondicherry, which daily acquired new inhabitants; but all this was not sufficient to invigorate a feeble constitution, as that of the Company had always been *.

The

* The first step taken was to prohibit the selling of Indian stuffs to foreigners, with the view, as it was said, to force them to purchase those of France. It was impossible the nation could gain any thing by such a romantic scheme, and the company lost thereby one of the principal branches of their trade.

The introduction of raw silk from China and Bengal was prohibited, under the pretext that it put a stop to the planting of mulberry-trees; though the truth is, that the tenth part thereof did not remain in the kingdom, the rest being sent to the neighbouring countries with a considerable profit.

They exported to India some painted calicoes, but a much greater quantity of plain calicoes, which had been printed within the kingdom after the Indian manner. The fondness which Europe then had for French fashions, gave great encouragement to this branch of manufacture; but ignorance and greed afterwards put an end to it, as falling within the general prohibition of painted calicoes.

By the book of rates, established in 1664, the goods which the Company were at liberty to import, paid such very moderate duties, that the highest did not amount to three per cent. Besides this, an additional duty was paid of six livres on every piece of cotton of ten ells, twenty livres per ell for gold or silver stuffs, and fifty sous per ell for plain taffetas and satins. In a little after this, however, none of these commodities were allowed to be sold within the kingdom, and the importation of muslins was for a time prohibited. All these variations convinced Europe, that it is with difficulty commerce is fixed or established in a country, where every thing depends on the caprice of a minister, or private interest of those in administration.

All these misfortunes which befel the Company, had been preceded by numberless faults on their own part. The original stockholders had not paid up their subscriptions with that punctuality so necessary in the affairs of commerce. The conduct of the governors

THE first scheme was to establish a great empire at Madagascar. A single armament carried over 1688 persons, who were made to expect a delightful climate, and a rapid fortune; whereas they found nothing but famine, discord, and death.

Decline of the French Company, and the cause of it.

So unfortunate a beginning discouraged the adventurers from an undertaking, which they had entered upon for fashion's sake, or out of complaisance. The owners of shares had not made good their payments so punctually as they ought, which is an essential thing in commercial concerns. The government, which had engaged to lend, without interest, a fifth part of the sums which should come into the Company's coffers, and had as yet been called upon but for two millions *, again drew the same sum out of the public treasure, in hopes of supporting the work they had begun. Some time after, they carried their generosity further still, and freely gave what at first was only lent.

This sacrifice on the part of the ministry could not, however, enable the Company to proceed in their operations. They were forced to confine them to Surat and Pondicherry, and to abandon their settlements at Bantam, Rajapore, Tilseri, Muzulipatam, Gombroon, and Siam.

No

governors and agents had neither been well directed, nor properly inspected. They had made dividends upon their capital, which should have arisen only from their profits. The most brilliant, though very unhappy reign, had served as a model to a Company of merchants. Voyages had been made with the same security in the time of general disorder, as during the most profound peace; and they had given up to a particular body the China trade, which, of all that can be carried on in Asia, is the most easy, advantageous, and sure. All these events had prepared the way for the downfall of the Company. The misfortunes of the war for the succession of Spain, hastened their ruin.

The consciousness of their inability, in 1708, to undertake any expedition, determined them to give their consent, that a certain rich individual should send two vessels to India, under the condition that they should draw five per cent. profit upon their goods. Four years after, they gave up trade altogether in favour of the merchants of St Malo, reserving to themselves the same profit. The disorder of their affairs was very great; as they owed more than six millions above what they were worth.

* 87,500 £.

No doubt they had too many factories, and some were ill situated; but this was not the reason for deserting them; it was merely their inability to support them.

Soon after, they were obliged to proceed a step further. In 1682, they gave permission, indiscriminately, to French subjects and foreigners to trade to the East Indies, for five years, in the Company's ships, paying the freight that should be agreed upon, and on condition that the goods brought home should be deposited in the Company's warehouses, sold with their own, and pay them a duty of five *per cent.* The public so eagerly came into this proposal, that the directors entertained great hopes from the increase of these small profits, which would be constant, without any risk: but the proprietors, despising these lesser emoluments, and jealous of the great profits made by the free traders, in two years time obtained a repeal of this regulation, and their charter remained in full force.

To support this monopoly with some decency, they wanted money. In 1684, the Company obtained from government a call upon all the proprietors, amounting to a quarter of their concern; and, in case any one failed to pay his call, his whole share was to be made over to another who had paid it for him. Whether from perverseness, from good reasons, or from inability, many did not pay, so that their shares lost three fourths of their original value; and, to the shame of the nation, men were found so barbarous, or so unjust, as to enrich themselves with their spoils.

This dishonourable expedient enabled to fit out a few ships for Asia; but they soon felt new wants. This cruel situation, which grew worse and worse, put them upon demanding of the proprietors, in 1697, the restitution of the dividends of ten and twenty *per cent.* which they had received in 1687 and 1691. So extraordinary a proposal raised a general clamour. They were obliged to have recourse to the usual method of borrowing. These loans became more chargeable, the more they were multiplied, because the payment grew more precarious.

As the Company were in want both of money and credit, the emptiness of their coffers put it out of their power to afford those advantages to the merchant in India, and..

that encouragement, without which he will neither work nor set others to work. This inability reduced the French sales to nothing. It is demonstrable, that, from 1664 to 1684, that is, in the space of twenty years, the sum total of their produce did not exceed nine millions one hundred thousand livres *.

To these had been added other abuses. The conduct of the administrators and agents for the Company had not been properly directed, or duly looked into. They had broken into their capital, and paid dividends out of their stock, which ought only to have arisen from the profits. The most brilliant and least prosperous of all reigns had exhibited a model for a commercial company. The trade to China, the easiest, the safest, and the most advantageous that is carried on with Asia, had been given up to a particular body of merchants.

The bloody war of 1689 added to the calamities of the India Company, even by the very successes of France. Swarms of privateers, fitted out from the several harbours in the kingdom, annoyed by their vigilance and bravery the trade of Holland and England. In their numberless prizes were found a prodigious quantity of India goods, which were retailed at a low price. The Company, who by this competition were forced to sell under prime cost, sought to find out some expedient to save themselves from this extremity, but could think of none that was reconcileable with the interest of the privateers; nor did the minister think proper to sacrifice an useful set of men, to a body who had so long wearied him with their murmurs and complaints.

After all, the Company had many more causes of discontent. The financiers had shewn an open hatred to them, and were constantly thwarting and clogging them. Supported by these vile associates which they always have at court, they endeavoured to annihilate the India trade, under the specious pretence of encouraging the home manufactures. The government was at first afraid of being exposed to reproach, by departing from the principles of Colbert, and repealing the most solemn edicts: but the farmers of the revenue found means to render

* 398,125 l.

render those privileges useless, which the ministry would not abolish ; and, without being absolutely deprived of them, the Company no longer enjoyed them.

Heavier duties were successively laid upon all India goods. Half a year seldom passed without some new regulation, and the use of these commodities were sometimes allowed, and sometimes prohibited : there was a continued scene of contradictions in the department of administration that would have required steady and invariable principles. All these wavering gave Europe room to think, that trade would hardly be established in a kingdom where all depends upon the caprices of a minister, or the interests of those who govern.

The conduct of an ignorant and corrupt administration, the levity and impatience of the proprietors, the selfish jealousy of the finance, the oppressive spirit of the treasury, joined to other causes, had prepared the ruin of the Company. The miseries of the war about the Spanish succession hastened their destruction.

Every resource was exhausted. The most confident saw no prospect of making the least armament. Besides, if by some unexpected good fortune, they should chance to fit out some few weak vessels, it was to be feared they might be seized in Europe, or in India, by disappointed creditors, who must be exasperated at being so long trifled with. These powerful motives determined the Company, in 1707, to consent that some rich merchants should send their own ships to India, upon condition that the former should be allowed fifteen *per cent.* profit upon the goods they should bring home, and the right of taking such share in those ships as their circumstances should admit of. Soon after this, they were even reduced to make over the whole and exclusive exercise of their privilege to some privateers of St Malo, still reserving the same concession, which, for some years past, had in some degree kept them alive.

Notwithstanding this desperate situation, in 1714, they solicited the renewal of their charter, which was nearly at an end, and which they had enjoyed for half a century. The ministry, who did not know, or would not see, that there were proper measures to be taken, granted them an indulgence for ten years longer. This new regulation took

took place but in part, in consequence of some extraordinary events, the causes of which we shall next inquire into.

WHOEVER has been accustomed to trace the progress of empires, has always considered the death of Colbert as the period that put an end to the true prosperity of France. She still appeared with some outward splendour; but her inward decay increased daily. Her finances, administered without order or principle, fell a prey to a multitude of rapacious farmers of the revenue. These people made themselves necessary by their very extortions, and went so far as to give the law to government itself. The confusion, usury, and continual alterations in the coin, the reductions of interest, the alienations of the domain and of the taxes, engagements which it was impossible to fulfil, the creations of pensions and places, the privileges and exemptions of all kinds, and a thousand other evils, each more ruinous than its neighbour, were the consequence of so corrupt an administration.

The loss of credit soon became universal. Bankruptcies were more frequent. Money grew scarce, and trade was at a stand. The consumption was smaller. The culture of lands was neglected. Artists went over to foreign countries. The common people had neither food nor cloathing. The nobility served in the army without pay, and mortgaged their lands. All orders of men groaned under the weight of taxes, and were in want of the necessaries of life. The royal effects had lost their value. The contracts upon the hotel de ville sold but for half their worth, and the bills of sale fell eighty or ninety *per cent.* under par. Lewis XIV. a little before his death, was in great want of eight millions*, and was forced to give bonds for 32,000,000†, which was borrowing at four hundred *per cent.*

In this confusion were public affairs, when the Duke of Orleans took the reins of government. Those who were for violent measures, proposed to sacrifice the creditors

The French Company recovers a glimpse of its ancient splendour by Law's system; but soon relapses into obscurity.

* 350,000L.

† 1,400,000L.

tors of the state to the landholders, as the former were in proportion to the latter but as one to six hundred. The regent refused to come into a measure that would have stamped an indelible stain upon his administration. He preferred an enquiry into the public engagements to a total bankruptcy.

Notwithstanding the reduction of 600,000,000* of stock to the holder, to 250,000,000† of government bonds, the national debt amounted to 262,138,001 livres‡, at twenty-eight livres || the mark, the interest of which, at four *per cent.* amounted to 89,983,453 livres§.

This enormous debt, which nearly absorbed the whole of the public revenue, suggested the idea of appointing a bed of justice, to call those to account who had been the authors of the public calamities, and had enriched themselves with the spoils of the nation. This inquiry only served to expose to public view, the incapacity of the ministers who had been entrusted with the management of the finances, the craft of the farmers of the revenue who had swallowed them up, and the baseness of the courtiers who had sold their interest to the first bidder. By this experiment, honest minds were confirmed in the abhorrence they always had for such a tribunal. It degrades the dignity of the prince, who fulfils not his engagements, and exposes to the people the vices of a corrupt administration. It is injurious to the rights of the citizen, who is accountable for his actions to none but the law. It strikes terror into the rich, who are marked out as delinquents, merely because they are rich, be their fortunes well or ill gotten. It gives encouragement to informers, who point out, as fit objects for tyranny, such as it may be advantageous to ruin. It is composed of unmerciful leeches, who see guilt wherever they suspect there is money. It spares plunderers, who take care to secrete their wealth in time; and strips honest men, who thought themselves secure in their innocence. It sacrifices the interests of the treasury to the whims of a few greedy, profligate, and extravagant favourites.

Whilst France was exhibiting to all Europe the cruel
and

* 26,250,000l. 10,937,500l. † 11,468,537l. 10s. 10*d.*
|| 1l. 4*s.* 6*d.* § 3,937,776l. 1*s.* 4*½**d.*

and disgraceful spectacle of these complicated evils a Scots empiric arrived at Paris, who for some time had been travelling about, and making a show of his talents, hurried on by his own restless disposition. His fiery genius, and peremptory manner, was capable of bearing down every argument, and surmounting every difficulty. In 1716, he suggested the idea of a bank, the success of which confounded his opponents, and even exceeded his own expectations. With ninety millions *, furnished by the West India Company towards this bank, it gave new life to agriculture, to trade, to arts, in short, to the whole nation. The author was extolled as an accurate, extensive, and elevated genius, who despised fortune, aimed only at glory, and wanted to transmit his name to posterity by great actions. Such was the gratitude of the public, that he was thought to deserve the highest honours. This astonishing prosperity gave him an unlimited authority. He made use of it, in 1719, to unite the East and West India Companies, as likewise those of Africa and China, into one body. Commercial schemes were the least concern of the new society. They carried their ambition so far as to pretend to pay off all the national debt. The government granted them the sole vending of tobacco, the mint, the receipts, and general farms, to enable them to pursue so grand a project.

At first, Law's schemes met with universal approbation. Six hundred and twenty-four thousand shares, mostly bought with government bills, and which, one with another, did not really cost 500 livres †, rose to 10,000 livres £, payable in bank notes. Such was the infatuation of the public, that not only Frenchmen, but foreigners, and even the most sensible people, sold their stock, their lands, their jewels, to play this extraordinary game. Gold and silver were held in no estimation; and nothing but paper currency was sought after.

This frenzy multiplied paper credit to such an amazing degree, that it circulated to the amount of 61,38,243,590 livres §, in shares of India stock, or in bank

* 3,937,500l.

† 21L 17s. 6d.

‡ 437L 10s.

§ 268,548,157L 1s. 3d.

notes, tho' there was actually in the kingdom no more than twelve hundred millions * in specie, at sixty livres the mark †.

Such a disproportion might possibly have been borne in a free nation, where it had been brought on by degrees. The citizens, accustomed to consider the nation as a permanent and independent body, trust to its security the more readily, as they are seldom thoroughly acquainted with its powers, and have a good opinion of its equity, founded on experience. Upon the strength of this favourable prejudice, credit is often stretched in those states beyond the real resources and securities of the nation. This is not the case in absolute monarchies, especially such as have often broke their engagements. If an implicit confidence is shewn in a fit of frenzy, the effect ceases with the cause. Their insolvency strikes every eye. The honesty of the monarch, the mortgage, the stock, every thing appears imaginary. The creditor, recovered from his delirium, demands his money with a degree of impatience proportionable to his uneasiness. The history of the system will corroborate this truth.

In order to answer the first demands, they had recourse to very strange expedients. Gold was prohibited in trade; all persons were forbidden to keep by them more than five hundred livres ‡ in specie. An edict was published, importing several successive diminutions in the value of the coin. This had the desired effect; people were now in no hurry to draw their money from the bank; on the contrary, in less than a month they brought in cash to the amount of forty-four millions six hundred ninety-six thousand one hundred and ninety livres § in specie, at eighty livres || the mark.

As this infatuation could not continue long, it was judged expedient to lessen the disproportion between paper and money, by reducing the bank bills to half their value, and the shares to five-ninths. The standard for the coin was fixed at eighty-two livres ten sols ** the mark. This operation, the most rational, perhaps, that could have been devised in the critical situation of affairs, completed the general confusion. The conferna-

tion

* 52,500,000 l. † 21. 12s. 6d. ‡ 21. 17s. 6d.
 § 1,955,458 l. 6s. 3d. || 31. 10s. ** 31. 12s. 2½ d.

tion was universal; every one imagined he had lost half his fortune, and was in a hurry to call in the remainder. The bank had no stock, and the stock-brokers found they had only been grasping at shadows. The foreigners, who had realized their paper at first, and carried off one third of the ready money of the kingdom, were the least losers. The hopes which the government had conceived of paying off the national debt vanished with Law, and there remained no solid monument of the system, but an India Company, whose shares were fixed by the liquidation of 1723, to the number of fifty-six thousand, but by subsequent events were reduced to fifty thousand, two hundred, sixty-eight, and four-tenths.

Unfortunately they preserved the privileges of the several companies out of which this new one had been formed; and this prerogative made them neither wise nor powerful: It confined the negro trade, and stopped the progress of the sugar colonies. Most of their privileges served only to authorise odious monopolies. The most fertile regions upon earth, when in their hands, were neither peopled nor cultivated. The spirit of finance, which restrains pursuits as much as the commercial spirit enlarges them, became the spirit of the Company, and has continued to be so ever since. The directors thought of nothing but making money of the rights ceded to the Company in Asia, Africa, and America. It became a society of farmers rather than a trading company. Nothing could possibly be said in praise of their administration, had they not been so honest as to pay off the debts accumulated in India for a century past, and had they not taken care to secure Pondicherry against any invasion, by surrounding it with walls. Their trade was but poor and precarious, till Orry was appointed to superintend the finances of the nation.

THAT upright and disinterested minister cast a blemish upon his virtues, by a harshness of temper which he shewed in a manner not much to the credit of the nation.

*Great success
of the French
in India.*

One day that a friend was upbraiding him for his rudeness, he answered, *How can it be otherwise? Out of a hundred people I see in a day, fifty take me for a fool, and*

fifty for a knave. He had a brother named Fulvy, who was less rigid in his principles, but had more affability, and greater capacity. He intrusted him with the concerns of the Company, which could not fail to thrive in such hands.

Notwithstanding the old and new prejudices, notwithstanding the abhorrence the public had for a relic of the system, notwithstanding the authority of the Sorbonne, which had decided that the dividend upon the shares came under the denomination of usury; notwithstanding the blindness of a nation credulous enough not to be shocked at so absurd a decision, yet the two brothers still found means to convince Cardinal Fleury, that it was right effectually to support the India Company. They even prevailed upon that minister, who was sometimes too parsimonious, to lavish the king's favours upon this establishment. The care of superintending its trade and increasing its powers, was afterwards committed to several persons of known abilities.

Dumas was sent to Pondicherry. He soon obtained permission of the court of Delhi to coin money; which privilege was worth four or five hundred thousand livres* a-year. He obtained a cession of the territory of Kara-cal, which entitled him to a considerable share in the trade of Tanjour. Some time after, a hundred thousand Marattas invaded the Decan. They attacked the Nabob of Arcot, who was vanquished and slain. His family and several of his subjects took refuge in Pondicherry. They were received with all the kindness due to allies in distress, Ragogi Bouffola, the general of the victorious army, demanded, that they should be delivered up to him, and further required the payment of 1,200,000 livres† by virtue of a tribute, which he pretended the French had formerly submitted to.

Dumas made answer, that so long as the Moguls had been masters of that country, they had always treated the French with the respect due to one of the most illustrious nations in the world, which took a pride in her turn in protecting her benefactors; that it was not in the nature of that generous nation to deliver up a number of women and children, and of unfortunate and defenceless men, to

* About 19,700l. on an average.

† 52,500l.

see them put to death ; that the fugitives then in the town were under the protection of his king, who esteem it his highest honour to be the protector of the unfortunate ; that every Frenchman in Pondicherry would gladly die in their defence ; and that it was as much as his head was worth, if his sovereign was to know that he had so much as listened to the mention of a tribute. He added, that he was determined to defend the place to the last extremity, and, if he was overpowered, he would get on board his ships, and return to Europe ; that Nagogi might consider of it, and see whether he chose to expose his army to utter destruction, when the most he could get by it was to take possession of a heap of ruins.

The Indians had not been accustomed to hear the French talk with so much dignity. This boldness staggered the General of the Marattas, and, after some negotiations skilfully carried on, he determined to keep peace with Pondicherry *.

Whilst Dumas was procuring wealth and respect to the Company, the government sent la Bourdonnais to the Isle of France.

At the time of their first navigations to India, the Portuguese had discovered, to the east of Madagascar, between the 19th and 20th degrees of Latitude, three islands, to which they gave the names of Mascarenhas, Ceréne, and Rodrigue. There they found neither men nor quadrupeds, and attempted no settlement upon either of the islands. The most western of them, which they had named Mascarenhas, served as a refuge, about the year 1665, to some Frenchmen, who before were settled

* It is the custom in India to make presents to those who have the charge of any negociation. Dumas having complimented the Envoy of the Marattas with some bottles of European liquor, he again made a present of them to his General's mistress, who finding them excellent, wished to have a store of them. Nagogi, in love with this woman to distraction, demanded the price they would put upon it. Dumas, being informed of the cause of this importunity, answered, that these liquors were only for his own use, and that of his friends. Nagogi, who could not withstand the desire of his mistress, renewed his demands. Upon which two Bramins, men of spirit, being sent as deputies to the camp of the Marattas carried them the liquors, and Pondicherry obtained peace.

at Madagascar. There they found an extent of sixty miles in length, and forty-five in breadth, full of mountains, and but few plains. At first they bred cattle, and afterwards they cultivated European corn, Asiatic and African fruits, and some vegetables fit for that mild climate. The health, plenty, and freedom they enjoyed, induced several sailors belonging to the ships that touched there for refreshment, to come and live amongst them. Industry increased with population. In 1718, they procured some coffee trees from Arabia, which succeeded tolerably well, though the fruit had lost much of his flavour. This culture, and other laborious employments, were performed by slaves which they got from the coast of Africa, or from Madagascar. Then the island, which had changed its name from Mascarenhas to the Isle of Bourbon, became an important object to the Company. The number of inhabitants, in 1763, amounted to 4627 white people, and 35,149 blacks; the cattle consisted of 8702 beefeves, 4084 sheep, 7405 goats, 7619 hogs. Upon an extent of 125,909 acres of cultivated land, they gathered as much caffava * as would subsist their slaves, 1,135,000 pound weight of corn, 844,100 pounds of rice, 2,879,100 pounds of maize, and 2,535,100 pounds of coffee, which the Company bought up at six sols † a-pound.

Unfortunately, this valuable possession has no harbour. This inconvenience determined the French to attempt a settlement on the island of Cerné, where the Portuguese had, as is their custom, left some quadrupeds and fowls for the benefit of such of their ships as should chance to call there. The Dutch, who afterwards took possession of it, abandoned it, for fear of multiplying their settlements too much. The island was uninhabited when the French landed there in 1720, and changed its name from Mauritius to the Isle of France, which it still bears.

The first inhabitants that were sent thither came over from Bourbon, and there they were forgotten for fifteen years. They only formed as it were a corps de garde, with orders to hang out a French flag, to inform all nations.

* *Caffava* or *Manibot*, is a crooked knotty shrub. Its wood is soft and brittle; and of its root is made a sort of bread. It grows likewise in America. T.

† About 3 d.

tions that the island had a master. The Company, long undetermined, at last resolved to keep it, and in 1735, la Bourdonnais was commissioned to improve it.

This man, who has since been so famous, was a native of St Malo, and had been at sea from the age of ten years; all his voyages had been prosperous, and in every one he had signalized himself by some extraordinary action. He had reconciled the Arabs and the Portuguese, who were just going to murder one another in the road of Mocha: and had distinguished himself in the war at Mahé. He was the first Frenchman who ever thought of sending armed vessels into the Indian seas. He was known to be equally skilful in the art of building, as in that of navigating and defending a ship. His schemes bore the mark of genius; nor were his views contracted by the close attention he paid to all the minute particulars of whatever plan he undertook. Difficulties did but quicken his activity, and display his talent for disposing the men under his command to the best advantage. Nothing was ever laid to his charge but an immoderate passion for riches; and it must be confessed he was not over scrupulous as to the means of acquiring them.

He was no sooner arrived at the Isle of France, than he made it his business to acquire every information he could concerning it. He found it to be 31,890 toises in its greatest diameter, 22,124 in its greatest breadth, and 432,680 acres in surface. The greater part of this ground was covered with almost impenetrable forests, and with mountains not above 400 toises high. Most of these hills were full of reservoirs of water, which poured down in streams upon a dark grey earth, entirely full of holes, and for the most part stony.

The sea-coast was what la Bourdonnais paid most attention to; and his principal observations related to the two harbours he found there. He thought the harbour on the south-east side not worth attending to, on account of the regular and high winds, which make it impossible, or at least very difficult, to sail out of it any season of the year. That on the north-west he found far preferable, though the ships must get to it through a narrow channel, between too flats, and then be towed in, and though it will scarcely admit above thirty-five or forty ships.

As soon as la Bourdonnais had taken these necessary informations, he endeavoured to instil a spirit of emulation into the first colonists on the island, who were quite disengaged at the neglect with which they had been treated, and to reduce to some subordination the vagrants lately arrived from the mother-country. He made them cultivate rice and wheat for the food of the Europeans, and cassava, which he had brought from Brazil for the slaves. They were to be furnished from Madagascar with meat for the daily consumption of the richer inhabitants, and of sea-faring men, till the cattle they had procured from thence should have multiplied so considerably, as to prevent the necessity of importing any more. A post which he had established on the little island of Rodriguez, abundantly supplied the poor with turtle. Here ships going to India, soon found all the refreshments and conveniences they wanted after a tedious passage. Three ships were fitted out, one of which carried 500 tons burthen. If the founder had not the satisfaction of bringing the colony to the utmost degree of prosperity it was capable of, he had at least the credit of having discovered what degree of importance it might acquire in able hands.

These improvements, however, though they seemed to be owing to enchantment, did not meet with the approbation of those who were principally concerned in them, and la Bourdonnais was compelled to justify himself. One of the directors asked him one day, how it came about that he had done the Company's business so ill, and his own so well? *Because*, said he, *I have done mine according to my own judgment, and that of the Company according to your directions.*

Great men have been always more useful to the public than large bodies of men. Nations and societies are but the instruments of men of genius: These have been the true founders of states and colonies. Spain, Portugal, Holland, and England, owe their conquests and settlements in the Indies to able warriors, experienced seamen, and legislators of superior talents. France, in particular, is more indebted to some fortunate individuals, than to the form of her government. One of these eminent men had just been fixing two important islands of Africa under the dominion of France; another still more extraordinary

ordinary person, whose name was Dupleix, added splendour to the French name in Asia.

He was first sent to the banks of the Ganges, where he superintended the colony of Chandernagore. That settlement, though on the fittest spot in the world for great commercial undertakings, had been but in a languishing condition, till he had the management of it. The Company was not in a condition to send any great stock, and the agents, who went over there without any fortune, had not been able to avail themselves of the liberty that was given them of advancing their own private affairs, as they were allowed to do. The activity of the new governor, who brought an ample fortune, the reward of ten years successful labours, soon spread throughout the colony. In a country overflowing with money, they easily found credit, when once they shewed themselves deserving of it. In a short time, Chandernagore became the wonder of its neighbours, and excited the envy of its rivals. Dupleix, who had engaged the rest of the French in his vast speculations, opened fresh sources of commerce all over the Mogul's dominions, and as far as Thibet. On his arrival, he had not found a single sloop; and he fitted out fifteen armed vessels at once. These ships carried on trade in different places in India. Some he sent out to the Red Sea, to the Gulph of Persia, to Sarat, to Goa, to the Maldivia and Manilla islands, and to all the seas where there was a possibility of trading to advantage.

Dupleix had for twelve years supported the honour of the French name on the Ganges, and increased both public and private fortunes, when he was called to Pondicherry in 1742, to take upon him the general superintendency of all the Company's affairs in India. They were then in a more flourishing condition than they had ever yet been, or have ever been since; for that year the returns amounted to twenty-four millions *. Had they continued to act prudently, had they confided more in two such men as Dupleix and la Bourdonnais, they would, in all probability, have acquired such power as would not have been easily destroyed.

La Bourdonnais foresaw an approaching rupture with England, and proposed a scheme, which would have secured

* 1,050,000 L.

cured to the French the sovereignty of the seas in Asia during the whole course of the war. He was convinced, that whichever nation should first take up arms in India, would have a manifest advantage over the other. He therefore desired to have a squadron, with which he should sail to the Isle of France, and there wait till hostilities began. From this place he was to go and cruise in the straits of Sunda, where most of the ships pass that are going to or coming from China. There he would have intercepted all the English ships, and saved the French. He would even have seized upon the small squadron which England had sent into those very latitudes ; and, having thus made himself master of the Indian seas, would have ruined all the English settlements in those parts.

The ministry approved of this plan, and granted him five men of war, with which he set sail.

He had scarcely set sail, when the directors, equally offended at their being kept in the dark as to the destination of the squadron, and at the expences it had occasioned them, and jealous of the advantage this would give to a man, who, in their opinion, was already too independent, exclaimed against this armament, as they had done before, and declared it to be useless. They were, or pretended to be, so fully convinced of the neutrality that would be observed in India between the two Companies, that they persuaded the minister into that opinion, when la Bourdonnais was no longer present to animate him, and guide his inexperience.

The Court of Versailles was not aware that a power, supported chiefly by trade, would not easily be induced to leave them in quiet possession of the Indian ocean ; and that, if she either made or listened to any proposals of neutrality, it must be only to gain time. They were not aware that, even supposing such an agreement was made *bona fide* on both sides, a thousand unforeseen events might interrupt it. They were not aware that the object proposed could never be fully answered, because the sea-forces of both nations, not being bound by any private agreement made between two companies, would attack their ships in the European seas. They were not aware that, in the colonies themselves, each would make preparations to guard against a surprize ; that these precautions would create

create mistrust on both sides; and that mistrust would bring on an open rupture. All these particulars were not perceived by them, and the squadron was recalled. Hostilities commenced, and the loss of almost every French ship going to India, shewed too late which of the two was the most judicious system of politics.

La Bourdonnais was as deeply affected for the errors that had occasioned the misfortunes of the nation, as if he had been guilty of them himself, and applied himself wholly to remedy them. Without magazines, without provisions, without money, he found means, by his attention and perseverance, to make up a squadron, composed of a sixty gun ship, and five merchantmen armed for war. He dared to attack the English squadron; he beat them, pursued and forced them to quit the coast of Coromandel; he then besieged and took Madras, the first of the English settlements. The victor was preparing for fresh expeditions, which were certain and easy; but he was opposed with an obstinacy which cost 9,057,000 livres*, which was the stipulated ransom of the city, exclusive of the success which must necessarily follow this event.

The company was then governed by two of the king's communars, who were irreconcileable enemies. The directors and the subalterns had taken part in the quarrel, according as their inclination or their interest led them. The two factions were extremely incensed against each other. That which had caused la Bourdonnais's squadron to be taken from him, was enraged to see that he had found resources in himself to ward off every blow that was aimed at him. There is good reason to believe, that this faction pursued him to India, and instilled the poison of jealousy into the heart of Dupleix. Two men, formed to esteem and love each other, to adorn the French name, and to descend together to posterity, became the vile tools of an animosity in which they were not the least interested. Dupleix opposed la Bourdonnais, and made him lose much time. The latter, after having staid too late on the Coast of Coromandel, waiting for the succours which had been unnecessarily delayed, saw his squadron destroyed by a storm. A division arose amongst his men.

Sa

* 396,242 l. 15 s.

So many misfortunes, brought on by the intrigues of Dupleix, determined la Bourdonnais to return to Europe, where a horrid dungeon was the reward of all his glorious services, and the end of all the hopes which the nation had built upon his great talents. The English, delivered from that formidable enemy in India, and recruited by great succours, found themselves in a condition to attack the French in their turn, and accordingly laid siege to Pondicherry.

Dupleix then made amends for past errors. He defended the town with great skill and bravery; and after the trenches had been opened six weeks, the English were forced to raise the siege. The news of the peace arrived soon after, and all hostilities ceased between the companies of both nations.

The taking of Madras, the naval combat of la Bourdonnais, and the raising of the siege of Pondicherry gave the Indian nations a high opinion of the French, and they were respected in those parts as the first and greatest of the European powers.

Dupleix endeavoured to avail himself of this disposition, and took care to procure great and solid advantages for his nation. In order to judge rightly of his projects, we must lay before the reader a description of the state of Indostan at that time.

Views of the French to aggrandize themselves. Account of Indostan.

If we may credit uncertain tradition, that fine rich country tempted the first conquerors of the world. But, whether Bacchus, Hercules, Sesostris, or Darius, did or did not carry their arms through that large portion of the globe, certain it is, that it proved an inexhaustible fund of fictions and wonders for the first Greeks. That people, ever credulous, because they were always carried away by their imagination, were so enchanted with these marvellous stories, that they still give credit to them, even in the more enlightened ages of the republic.

If we consider this matter according to the principles of reason and truth, we shall find that a pure air, wholesome food, and great frugality, had early multiplied men to a prodigious degree in Indostan. They were acquaint-

ed

ed with laws, civil government, and arts, whilst the rest of the earth was a savage desert. Wise and beneficial institutions preserved these people from corruption, and their only care was to enjoy the gifts of the earth and of the climate. If, from time to time, their morals were tainted in some of these states, the throne was immediately subverted ; and, when Alexander entered these regions, he found very few kings, and many free cities.

A country divided into numberless little states, some of which were popular, and others enslaved, could not make a very formidable resistance against the hero of Macedon. His progress was rapid ; and he would have subdued the whole country, had not death stopped his career in the midst of his triumphs.

By following this conqueror in his expeditions, the Indian Sandrocotus had learned the art of war. This obscure man, who had no claim but from his talents, collected a numerous army, and drove the Macedonians out of the Provinces they had invaded. The deliverer of his country then made himself master of it, and united all Indostan under his dominion. How long he reigned, or what was the duration of the empire he had founded, is not known.

At the beginning of the eighth century, the Arabs over-ran India, as they did many other parts of the world. They subjected some few islands to their dominion ; but, content with trading peaceably on the continent, they made but few settlements on them.

Three centuries after this, some barbarians of their religion, who came out from Khorasan, headed by Mahmoud, attacked India on the north side, and extended their depredations as far as Guzarat. They carried off immense spoils from those wealthy provinces, and buried them under ground in their wretched and uncultivated deserts.

These calamities were not yet forgotten, when Gengiskan, who with his Tartars had subdued the greatest part of Asia, brought his victorious army to the western coasts of India. This was about the year 1200. It is not known what part this conqueror and his descendants took in the affairs of Indostan. Probably, they did not

concern themselves much about them ; for it appears that, soon after, the Patans reigned over this fine country.

These are said to have been Arabian merchants settled on the coasts of Indostan, who, taking advantage of the weakness of the several kings and nations who had admitted them, easily seized upon several provinces, and founded a vast empire, of which Delhi was the capital. Under their dominion, India was happy ; because men educated to trade had not brought along with them that spirit of devastation and rapine which commonly attends invaders.

The Indians scarce had time to accustom themselves to a foreign yoke, when they were once more forced to change masters. Tamerlane, who came from great Tartary, and was already famous for his cruelties and his victories, marched to the north side of Indostan, at the end of the fourteenth century, with a triumphant, well-disciplined, and indefatigable army. He secured the northern provinces in person, and abandoned the plunder of the southern parts to his Lieutenants. He seemed determined to subdue all India, when on a sudden he turned his arms against Bajazet, vanquished and dethroned that prince ; and, by the union of all his conquests, found himself master of the immense space that extends from the delicious coast of Smyrna, to the fortunate borders of the Ganges. After his death, bloody wars deprived his posterity of his rich spoils. Babar, the fifth descendent of one of his children, alone survived to preserve his name.

That young prince, brought up in sloth and luxury, reigned in Samarcand, where his ancestor had ended his days. The Usbeck Tartars dethroned him, and constrained him to take refuge in the Cabulistan. Ranguidas, the governor of the province, received him kindly, and gave him an army.

This wise man addressed him in the following manner :
 " It is not towards the north, where vengeance would naturally call thee, that thy steps must be directed.
 " Soldiers enervated by the pleasures of India, could not without temerity attack warriors famous for their courage and their victories. Heaven has conducted thee to the banks of the Indus, in order to fix upon thy brow

"knew one of the richest diadems of the universe. Cast
"thine eyes on Indostan. That empire, torn in pieces
"by the incessant wars of the Indians and Patans, calls
"for a master. It is in those delightful regions that
"thou must establish a new monarchy, and raise thy glo-
"ry equal to that of the formidable Tamerlane."

This judicious advice made a strong impression on the mind of Babar. A plan of usurpation was traced out without loss of time, and pursued with activity and skill. Success attended the execution. The northern provinces, not excepting Delhi, submitted; after some resistance; and thus a fugitive monarch had the honour of laying the foundation of the power of the Mogul Tartars, which subsists to this day.

The preservation of this conquest required a form of government. That which Babar found established in India was a kind of despotism, merely relative to civil matters, tempered by customs, forms, and opinion; in a word, adapted to that mildness which these nations derive from the influence of the climate, and from the more powerful influence of religious tenets. To this peaceable constitution, Babar instituted a violent, and military despotism, such as might be expected from a conquering and barbarous nation.

Ranguildas was long witness to the power of the new sovereign, and exulted in the success of his own counsels. The recollection of the steps he had taken to place his master's son upon the throne, filled his soul with heartfelt satisfaction. One day, as he was praying in the temple, he heard a Banian, who stood by him, cry out, "O God! thou seest the sufferings of my brethren. "We are a prey to a young man who considers us as his property, which he may squander and consume as he pleases. Among the many children who call upon thee from these vast regions, one oppresses all the rest; avenge us of the tyrant; avenge us of the traitors who have placed him on the throne, without examining whether he was a just man."

Ranguildas, astonished, drew near to the Banian, and said, "O thou, who curlest my old age, hear me. If I am guilty, my conscience has misled me. When I restored the inheritance to the son of my sovereign, when

" I exposed my life and fortune to establish his authority, God is my witness that I thought I was acting in conformity to his wise decrees ; and, at the very instant when I heard thy prayer, I was again thanking Heaven for granting me, in my latter days, those two greatest of blessings, rest and glory."

" Glory ! cries the Banian. Learn, Ranguildas, that glory belongs only to virtue, and not to actions which are only splendid, without being useful to mankind. Alas ! what advantages did you procure to Indostan, when you crowned the son of an usurper ? Had you previously examined whether he was capable of doing good, and whether he would have the will and resolution to be just ? You say, you have restored to him the inheritance of his fathers, as if men could be bequeathed and possessed like lands and cattle. Pretend not to glory, O Ranguildas ! or if you look for gratitude, go and seek it in the heart of Babar ; he owes it to you. You have bought it dear enough ; the price has been the happiness of a whole nation."

Babar, however, whilst he was bringing his subjects under the yoke of despotism, took care to limit its authority, and to draw up his institutions with so much force, that his successors, though absolute, could not possibly be unjust. The prince was to be the judge of the people, and the arbiter of the state ; but his tribunal and his council were to be held in the public square. Injustice and tyranny love darkness, in order to conceal themselves from their intended victims. But, when the monarch's actions are to be submitted to the inspection of his subjects, it is a sign he intends them nothing but good. Openly to insult a number of men assembled, is such an outrage as even a tyrant would blush at.

The principal support of his authority was a body of four thousand men, who filled themselves the first slaves of the prince. Out of this body were chosen the Omrahs, that is to say, those persons who composed the emperor's councils, and on whom he bestowed lands, distinguished by great privileges. These sort of possessions always reverted to the crown. It was on this condition that all great offices were given. So true it is, that despotism enriches its slaves only to strip them.

Great.

Great interest, however, was made for the place of Omrah. Whoever aspired to the government of a province made this the object of his ambition. To prevent any projects the governors might form for their own aggrandizement or independence, they always had overseers placed about them, who were not in the least subject to them, and who were commissioned to inspect the use they made of the military force they were entrusted with, to keep the conquered Indians in awe. The fortified towns were frequently in the hands of officers, who were accountable to none but the court. That suspicious court often sent for the governor, and either continued or turned him out, as it happened to suit her fluctuating policy. These vicissitudes were grown so common, that a new governor coming out of Delhi, remained upon his elephant with his face turned towards the city, *waiting, as he said, to see his successor come out.*

The form of government, however, was not the same every where throughout the empire. The Moguls had left several Indian princes in possession of their sovereignties, and even with a power of transmitting them to their descendants. They governed according to the laws of the country, though accountable to a Nabob appointed by the court. They were only obliged to pay tribute, and to conform to the conditions stipulated with their ancestors at the time of the conquest.

The conquering nation must not have committed any considerable ravages, since it does not yet constitute more than a tenth part of the population of India. There are a hundred millions of Indians to ten millions of Tartars. The two nations have never intermixed. The Indians are the only farmers and artificers. They live in the country, and carry on the manufactures. The Mohammedans are to be found in the capital, at court, in great cities, in camps and armies*.

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It

* It is generally supposed, that the conquerors, the more firmly to establish their authority, reserved to themselves the property of the lands, part of which they left to the former owners, and part in trust to other persons. This opinion is not altogether just. In all the countries where the Indian princes continued to govern under the authority of the Mogul, the farmer was at liberty to dispose,

It appears, that at that period, when the Moguls entered Indostan, they found no private property. All the lands belonged to the Indian princes ; and it may easily be imagined that savage conquerors, sunk in ignorance and avarice, did not rectify this abuse, which is the utmost stretch of arbitrary power. That portion of the lands of the empire which the new sovereigns call their own, was divided into large governments, which were called Subahships. The Subahs, who were entrusted with the civil and military government, were also appointed to receive the revenues. This they committed to the care of the Nabobs, whom they established throughout their Subahships ; and these again trusted this business to private farmers, whose immediate business it was to cultivate the lands.

At the beginning of their year, which is in June, the Nabob's officers agreed with the farmers for the price of a lease. They drew up a contract, called *jamabandi*, which was deposited in the chancery of the province ; after which the farmers went, each in his own district, to look for husbandmen, and advanced them considerable sums to enable them to sow the ground. After harvest, the farmers remitted the produce of their lease to the Nabob's officers. The Nabob delivered it to the Subah, and the Subah poured it into the emperor's treasures. The leases were commonly for half the produce of the land ;

dispose, at his pleasure, of the fields which he cultivated with the sweat of his brow. If he has been driven out of his possession, as frequently happens, by the person entrusted to collect a portion of the fruits, and to pay a fixed sum to government, this is considered as an act of tyranny, which never fails to bring the public execration upon the man who either exercises, or authorizes it. Even in the cantons that are under absolute subjection, the husbandman was not deprived of the right of selling, or disposing by will, whether the Emperor gave them their lands in fief, or was pleased only to farm them out. The Indian and Mogul policy was always the same, not to allow any one family to get into their hands too extensive possessions. As all their acquisitions of landed property are subjected to tedious forms, had any one attempted to make himself master of the smallest piece of ground, he would be refused the certificates necessary to put him in possession, and his head be marked as a victim necessary to be sacrificed to the tranquillity of the state.

land; the other half went to pay the charges of culture, to enrich the farmers, and to feed the labourers. In this system were comprised, not only grain, which is the principal crop, but all other productions of the earth. Betel, salt, tobacco, were all farmed in the same manner.

There were also some custom-houses, and some duties upon the public markets; but no poll-tax, or any tax upon industry. It had not entered the heads of those arbitrary rulers, to demand any thing of men who had nothing left them. The weaver sitting at his loom worked without uneasiness, and freely disposed of the fruit of his labour.

This liberty extended to every kind of moveables. They were truly the property of private people, who were not accountable to any person for them. They could dispose of them in their lifetime; and, after their death, they devolved to their descendants. The houses of artificers, the town-houses, with the little gardens belonging to them, were likewise accounted private property. They were hereditary, and might be sold.

In the latter case, the buyer and seller appeared before the Cothoal. The conditions of the bargain were drawn up in writing, and the Cothoal affixed his seal to the deed, to make it authentic.

The same formality was observed with regard to the purchase of slaves; that is, of those unfortunate men, who, under the pressure of poverty, preferred being in bondage to one man, who allowed them a subsistence, to living under that general slavery, in which they had no means of procuring the necessaries of life. They then sold themselves for a sum of money, and this was transacted in presence of the Cothoal, that the master's property might not be contested.

The Cothoal was a kind of notary public. There was one in every manufactory. It was before him that the few deeds were transacted, which the nature of such a government would admit of. Another officer, called Jemidar, decided all differences that arose between man and man, and his decisions were almost always definitive, unless the cause was a very important one, or unless the aggrieved party was rich enough to pay for having it reversed.

reversed at the Nabob's Court. The Jemidar was likewise intrusted with the police. He had a power of inflicting slight punishments; but all capital offences were reserved for the judgment of the Nabob, as he alone had a right to pronounce sentence of death.

Such a government, which was no better than a subordinate despotism from the throne down to the meanest officer, could have no other spring than a coercive power constantly exerted. Accordingly, as soon as the rainy season was over, the monarch quitted his capital and resided in his camp. The Nabobs, the Rajas, and the principal officers were summoned to attend him, and in this manner he proceeded thro' all the provinces successively in warlike pomp, which did not, however, exclude political craft. One great man was often employed to oppress another. The most odious refinement of despotism is that of dividing its slaves. These divisions were fomented by informers publicly kept by the prince, who were continually spreading alarm and terror. These informers were always chosen among persons of the first rank. Corruption is then at its height, when power can confer nobility on what is mean.

Every year, the Great Mogul set out on his progress, more as a conqueror than as a sovereign. He went to administer justice in the provinces, as if he was going to plunder them; and maintained his authority by a parade of military force, which makes arbitrary government a perpetual war. This manner of governing, though with legal forms, is very dangerous for the monarch. So long as the people feel their wrongs only through the channel of those who are invested with his authority, they only murmur, upon the supposition that the sovereign is ignorant of them, and would not suffer any injustice if he knew it: but, when the sovereign gives it a sanction by his presence, and by his own decisions, then all confidence is at an end; the deception vanishes; he was a god; now he is an idiot, or a wicked man.

Nevertheless, the Mogul Emperors have long enjoyed the superstitious idea the nation had conceived of their sacred character. That outward pomp which captivates the people more than justice, because men are more struck with what dazzles their eyes than with what is beneficial,

to them; the richness and elegance of the prince's court; the grandeur that surrounded him in his travels; all this kept up in the minds of the people those prejudices of servile ignorance, which trembles before the idol it has raised. The various accounts that have been transmitted to us of the luxury of the most brilliant courts in the world, are not to be compared to the ostentatious pomp of the Great Mogul when he appears before his subjects. The elephants, formerly so dreadful in war, but which are become useless masses in an army since the introduction of gunpowder; these immense animals, that are unknown in our climates, give an Asiatic tyrant an air of grandeur, of which we have no conception. The people prostrate themselves before their majestic sovereign, who sits exalted upon a throne of gold, all glittering with precious stones, mounted on the haughty animal, who proceeds slowly, proud to present the master of a great empire to the respect of so many slaves. Thus, by dazzling the eyes of men, or inspiring them with terror, the Moguls preserved, and even enlarged their conquests. Aurengzebe completed them, by making himself master of the whole peninsula. All Indostan, excepting a little slip of land along the coast of Malabar, submitted to that superstitious and barbarous tyrant, who had imbrued his hands in the blood of his father, his brothers, and his nephews.

This execrable despot had made the Mogul power an object of detestation; but he supported it as long as he lived. At his death it fell, never to rise again. The uncertainty as to the right of succession was the first cause of the disturbances that arose after his demise, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Only one law was generally acknowledged, that which enacted, that the sceptre should never go out of the family of Tamerlane; but every emperor was at liberty to chuse his successor, without being obliged to regard the degree of consanguinity. This indefinite right proved a source of discord. Young princes, whose birth entitled them to expect the crown, and who frequently were at the head of a province and an army, supported their claim sword in hand, and paid little regard to the will of a monarch who was no more. This happened at the death of Aurengzebe.

rengzebe. His rich spoils were stained with blood. In these convulsions of the body politic, the springs that restrained a militia of twelve hundred thousand men were relaxed. Every Nabob aimed at being independent, at increasing the contributions raised upon the people, and lessening the tributes sent into the emperor's treasure. No longer was any thing regulated by law; all was carried on by caprice, or disturbed by violence.

The education of the young princes promised no remedy for all these evils. Left to the care of women till the age of seven years, tutored afterwards in some religious principles, they went and spent, in the soft indulgences of a seraglio, those years of youth and activity which ought to be employed in forming the man, and instructing him in the knowledge of life. They took care to enervate them, that they might have nothing to fear from them. Conspiracies of children against their fathers were but too common; to prevent these, therefore, the children were deprived of every virtue, lest they should be capable of a crime. Hence that shocking thought of an oriental poet, that *fathers, whilst their sons are living, are fonder of their grandsons, because they love in them the enemies of their enemies.*

The Moguls had retained nothing of those hardy manners they had brought from their mountains. Those who were advanced to high offices, or had acquired large fortunes, removed their habitations according to the seasons. In these more or less delightful retreats, they lived in houses built only of clay or earth; but the inside breathed all the Asiatic indulgence, with all the pomp of the most corrupted courts. Wherever men cannot raise a lasting fortune, nor transmit it to their posterity, they make haste to crowd all their enjoyments into the only moment they can call their own. All their pleasures and their very existence are passed away in the midst of perfumes and women.

The Mogul empire was in this state of weakness and effeminacy when it was attacked, in 1738, by the famous Thamas Kouli-Khan. The innumerable militias of India were dispersed without resistance before a hundred thousand Persians, as those very Persians had formerly fled before thirty thousand Greeks trained up by Alexander.

ander. Thamas entered triumphantly into Delhi, received the homage of the weak Mahomed; and finding the monarch still more stupid than his subjects, he suffered him to live and to reign, united to Persia all the provinces that suited him, and returned loaded with an immense booty, the spoils of Indostan.

Mahomed, despised by his conqueror, was still more so by his subjects. The great men would not serve under a vassal of the king of Persia. The Nabobships became independent, only paying a small tribute. In vain did the emperor declare that the Nabobs should still be removable; each of them strove with all his power to make his dignity hereditary, and the sword decided every quarrel. The subjects were constantly at war with their master, and were not considered as rebels. Whoever could afford to pay a body of troops, pretended to a sovereignty. The only formality observed was to counterfeit the emperor's sign-manual in a firman, or warrant of investiture. It was brought to the usurper, who received it on his knees. This farce was necessary to impose upon the people, who had still respect enough remaining for the family of Tamerlane, to chuse that all authority should, at least, appear to proceed from it.

Thus did discord, ambition, and anarchy desolate this fine region of Indostan. Crimes could the more easily be concealed, as it was the custom of the grandees never to write but in ambiguous terms, and to employ none but obscure agents, whom they disowned when they found it necessary. Murder and poison became common crimes, which were buried in the dark recesses of those impenetrable palaces, full of assassins, ever ready to perpetrate the blackest acts on the least signal from their master *.

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* It was not even necessary to have a patent from a Prince, or to be the heir of a person who possessed one, in order to have a title to aspire to sovereignty. In a country where there is no hereditary nobility but that of the blood royal, where there must be an act of the Sovereign to nobilitate the son even of a Grand Vizier, where the field of fortune is open to every man of spirit or courage, where more than a half of the Grandees of the empire are sprung from the meanest of the people; in such a country, every man who is possessed of money may entertain the hope of one day becoming a Nabob. After this intentions are made public, the

The foreign troops that were called in by the contending parties, completed the misery of this unhappy country.

the independent chiefs of war, who station their troops where they can be best subsisted, come to rank themselves under his colours. In a few weeks they find themselves at the head of a numerous army. Should fortune favour him, the Imperial Court fails not to declare herself in favour of a man, who frequently does not even wait for her approbation. This contempt of the chief of the empire was carried so far, that his orders were counterfeited. The pretended deputies who carried them, were received with great state. Bows and prostrations were made before them. They publicly gave them back their credentials, and the firmans wherewith they said they were entrusted. This farce was necessary to conciliate the minds of the people, who always preserved so great a respect to the blood of Tamerlane, that an usurper never possessed a firm footing, unless he could bring himself to be considered as a favourite of the Prince, at the very time he had taken up arms against his authority.

By these wars, namely those between the Omrahs and the Ra-jahs, whose ambition is boundless, oppression, ravages, and anarchy prevailed in Indostan.

These calamities raged with the greater violence, that it was not even an easy matter to discover the authors of them. The secrets of the Emperors of Mogul have been always impenetrable. In the most peaceful times, when affairs of importance were transacted, they never wrote but in ambiguous terms; and for any dis-honourable busineſs they were content to employ some obscure agent, whom they disowned, if they found it necessary. When the defects of their government had arrived at their last stage, they joined to these principles of a wretched policy, poison and assassinat-ion. Nothing is so easy to Indian princes, as to order or conceal a murder in their apartments, to which there is no access but by indirect passages, filled with dreadful guards, who are posted to preserve the life of their master, and to stab those who give him any umbrage. These detestable practices have become so common, that a man cannot pay the last debt to nature, without having his death imputed to those who draw any visible advantage from it. Under an arbitrary government, a man cannot act his proper part. Under a feeble and unsteady government, he cannot act a virtuous one. In both the one and the other situation, the bonds of society and order are dissolved, and persons abandon themselves to all manner of crimes by which they can reap any advantage.

The troops that were able to have put a stop to this disorder, encrusted it still more. Though inrolled in the name of the Emperor, they acknowledged only the Nabobs, who had the burden of paying them out of the revenues of their government. The latter, who did not depend much on the attachment of these corps

try. They carried off all their riches, or obliged the owners to bury them under ground; so that the treasures amassed

corps, collected or united by venality, disbanded those for whom they thought they had no occasion, and sent them back to their own provinces, deprived of the pay that was due them; and, to be more secure against their resentment, they hired troops to cut them in pieces, who were fonder of the money granted to them for that purpose, than of executing the orders they received. Even those who did not carry matters to that excess, never failed to let part of the pay of their troops run in arrear. This practice was generally considered as necessary to render those mercenaries faithful to their colours, who had been gathered together from all the parts of a despotic empire. The first ambitious man who was able and willing to pay them, to bring about a revolution, had no more to do than present himself. Independent of this danger, they run the risk of seeing them refuse to march against the enemy, or else to fight carelessly. Their inactivity and want of spirit were but too much encouraged by the conduct of their commissaries, who had the charge of overseeing the provisions, and the good order of the troops. A taste for luxury and ostentation, natural to the Moguls; a certain incapacity of resisting fancies which seem to be natural to the climate, where all the sensations are violent, but of a short duration; effeminacy, and all the vices which precede or accompany it, make them sacrifice the purchase of a jewel, or ornament of value, to money, which would have been sufficient to prevent the total defection of an army.

The riches accumulated in Indostan, during a long succession of ages, for some time preserved this unhappy country from complete ruin. By degrees these treasures disappeared. Discouragement and distrust occasioned a part of them to be buried in the bowels of the earth; the foreign troops, that had been invited either to set up or support usurpers, carried a good deal of them with them to their own country; the remainder was no more to be found but in the hands of usurers, or avaricious brokers. To draw it out of their hands, the Moguls, lazy, cruel, and voluptuous, made use of Gentoos, whose phlegmatic and indefatigable genius rendered them fit instruments of oppression. When their prodigality had squandered away the means with which the minister of their tyranny had been enabled to supply them, they put him to the rack, in order to compel him to reveal where he had concealed his plunder. If the money which they squeezed out of him was sufficient for the necessity or whim of the present moment, he was reinstated in his office; but if his avarice did not give up enough to satisfy these oppressors, it cost him his head, and another was put in his place. These resources of a despotic, partial, avaricious, odious, and despotic government, at last had an end, and were exhausted in the bysses of dissipation, into which the prosperity of the public had fallen by such mal-administration. In the space of a few years,

amassed for so many ages gradually disappeared. A general dejection ensued. The grounds lay uncultivated, and the manufactures stood still. The people would no longer work for foreign plunderers, or domestic oppressors. Want and famine were soon felt. These calamities, which for ten years had infested the provinces of the empire,

thousands of men perished with misery and famine in this fertile country. The husbandman durst no longer plow. The weavers, artificers, and merchants, abandoned their trade and occupations. In consequence of these misfortunes, public works were interrupted, and business of every kind languished. These calamities, which had ravaged for ten years the greatest part of the empire, at last reached the coast of Coromandel. This country had been hitherto preserved from these terrible plagues by the authority of the Subah of Decan, Nizam-Al-Muluck: But this wise governor having died, it was foreseen, that the trade of foreigners to India would fall with him, and that our vessels, after a long stay in dangerous latitudes, would be obliged to return empty, or with trifling or unprofitable cargoes. It appeared that this disorder behaved always to increase, unless the Europeans, who traded with India, had not taken care to provide, in a country they had subdued, a sufficient number of artificers and manufacturers, to supply them with a considerable part of the commodities of which they stood in need.

Such was the idea of Dupleix; it was brilliant, but bolder still. The Europeans, always successful in a war against the Indians, at the time of their first settlements, had never gained any considerable advantage over the conquerors of Indostan. Many trials, always unfortunate, had convinced them, that the Moguls were not only brave, but formidable enemies. These repeated checks had accustomed them to endure the same mortifications as the natives of the country, the slaves of a most despotic government. The meanest officer of the most petty Nabob treated these foreigners with insolence, imposed laws on them, and, at their pleasure, extorted from them very considerable sums. If they ventured sometimes to complain of these oppressions, it was with an unbounded submission, and accompanied with presents. In a government where the superior thinks nothing is due to an inferior, where the favours of the Prince are always corrupted by some mean and selfish consideration, justice can never be obtained but at that expence. Garrisons without money, without discipline, and without subordination, while they diminished considerably the profits of trade, were unable to stop the course of these crying oppressions. Amidst this concurrence of unfavourable circumstances, the manufactures proper for the West had risen so much in their price, and diminished in quality, that the profits were insensibly reduced to a trifle.

empire, began to visit the coast of Coromandel. The wise Nizam-Al-Muluck, Subah of the Decan, was now no more. His prudence and talents had kept that part of India which he had commanded in a flourishing state. The European merchants were apprehensive that their trade would fall off, when it had lost that support. They saw no resource against that danger, but to have a territory of their own, large enough to contain a number of manufactures sufficient to make up their lading.

Dupleix was the first who considered this as a practicable scheme. The war had brought many troops to Pondicherry, with which he hoped, by rapid conquests, to procure greater advantages than the rival nations had obtained by a steady conduct, and mature deliberation.

He had long studied the character of the Moguls, their intrigues, their political interests. He had acquired such knowledge of these matters, as might have been surprising even in a man brought up at the court of Delhi. These informations, deeply combined, had convinced him that it would be in his power to attain a principal influence in the affairs of Indostan, and might possibly manage them as he pleased. His daring spirit, which prompted him to attempt more than he was able to perform, gave additional strength to his reflections. Nothing terrified him in the great part he proposed to act, at the distance of six thousand leagues from his native country. In vain did his friends represent to him the dangers attending such an undertaking; he considered nothing but the glorious advantage of securing to France a new dominion in the heart of Asia; to enable her, by the revenues annexed to it, to defray the charges of trade, and the expences of sovereignty; and even to free her from the tribute which our luxury pays to the industry of the Indians, by procuring rich and numerous cargoes, which should not be bought with any exports of money, but from the overflowings of the new revenues. Full of this great project, Dupleix eagerly seized the first opportunity that offered to put it in execution, and soon took upon him to dispose of the Subahship of the Decan, and the Nabobship of the Carnatic, in favour of two men who were ready to give up any thing he should require.

The Subahship of the Decan is a vice-royalty, composed of several provinces, which were formerly so many independent states. It extends from Cape Comorin to the Ganges. The Subah has the inspection of all the Indian princes, and all the Mogul governors within his jurisdiction ; and in his hands are deposited the contributions that are destined to fill the public treasure. He can compel his subalterns to attend him in all military expeditions he may think proper to make into the countries under his dominion ; but he must not march them into a foreign territory, without an express order from the emperor.

The Subahship of the Decan becoming vacant in 1748, Dupleix, after a series of events and revolutions, in which the corruption of the Moguls, the weakness of the Indians, and the boldness of the French, were alike conspicuous, disposed of it, towards the beginning of the year 1751, in favour of Salabatzing, a son of the late viceroy.

This success secured great advantages to the French settlements along the coast of Coromandel ; but Pondicherry was a place of such importance, that our people thought it deserved a particular attention. This town, which is situated in the Carnatic, has such constant and immediate connections with the Nabob of that rich district, that it was thought adviseable to procure the government of the province to a man whose affection and submission might be depended on. The choice fell upon Chandasad, a kinsman of the late Nabob, well known for his intrigues, his misfortunes, his warlike exploits, and his steadiness of temper.

To return for their services, the French made him give up an immense territory. At the head of their acquisitions was the island of Seringham, formed by the two branches of the Caveri. This long and fertile island derives its name and its consequence from a Pagoda, which is fortified, as are most great buildings that are devoted to public worship. The temple is surrounded with seven square inclosures, at the distance of three hundred and fifty feet from each other, and formed by pretty high walls, which are proportionably thick. The altar stands in the center. A single monument like this, with its fortifications, and the mysteries and riches it contains, is

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more likely to maintain and perpetuate a religion than a multiplicity of temples and priests dispersed in different towns, with their sacrifices, ceremonies, prayers, and discourses, which by their number, their frequent repetition, and their being performed in public, are apt to tire the people, excite the contempt of enlightened reason, occasion dangerous profanations, or are slighted and neglected, which the priests dread more than sacrilege itself. The priests of India, as wise as those of Egypt, suffer no stranger to penetrate into the Pagoda of Seringham. Amidst the fables with which the history of this temple is wrapped up, probably some acute philosopher might, if he was admitted into it, trace from the emblems, the form and construction of the edifice, and the superstitious practices and traditions peculiar to that sacred inclosure, many sources of instruction, and an insight into the history of the remotest ages. Pilgrims resort thither from all parts of Indostan, to obtain absolution of their sins, and always bring an offering proportionable to their circumstances. These gifts were still so considerable at the beginning of the present century, as to maintain forty thousand men in a life of sloth and idleness. These Bramins, though under the restraints of subordination, were so well satisfied with their situation, that they seldom quitted their retirement for the more busy scenes of intrigue and politics.

Independent of other advantages which the French enjoyed by the acquisition of Seringham, the situation gave them great influence over the neighbouring countries, and an absolute command over the kingdom of Tanjour, as they could at any time stop the waters that were wanted for the culture of their rice.

The territories of Karical and Pondicherry got an accession of ten leagues each, with fourscore manufactures. If these acquisitions were not so considerable as that of Seringham, in point of influence over public affairs, they were much more so with regard to trade.

But this was a trifling acquisition compared to the territory they gained to the north, which comprehended the Condavir, Masulipatam, the island of Divi, and the four provinces of Muksafanagur, Elur, Rajamandry, and Chikakol. Such important concessions made the French ma-

sters of the coast for the space of six hundred miles, and procured them the best linen of all Indostan. It is true, they were to enjoy the four provinces no longer than they should furnish the Subah with a stipulated number of troops, and maintain them at their own expence ; but this agreement, which was only binding to their honesty, gave them little concern. Their ambition previously seized upon those treasures that had been heaped up in those vast regions for so many ages.

The ambition of the French, and their projects of conquest, went still much farther. They proposed to obtain a cession of the capital of the Portuguese colonies, and to seize upon the triangular space which lies between Masulipatam, Goa, and Cape Comorin.

In the mean time, till they could realize these brilliant chimeras, they considered the personal honours that were lavished upon Dupleix as a presage of the greatest prosperity. It is well known, that every foreign colony is more or less odious to the natives ; that it is good policy to endeavour to lessen their aversion ; and that the surest way to attain that end, is to conform as much as possible to the customs and manners of the country. This maxim, which is true in general, is more particularly so in countries where the people think but little, as is the case in India.

The French commander, who was fond of the Asiatic pomp, had no objection to this conformity. He was overjoyed when he saw himself invested with the dignity of a Nabob. That title put him upon a level with those whose protection he solicited before, and afforded him considerable opportunities to pave the way for those great revolutions he meant to bring about, in order to promote the important interests with which he was intrusted. He entertained still greater hopes on being appointed governor of all the Mogul possessions, throughout an extent little inferior to the whole kingdom of France. All the revenues of those rich provinces were to be deposited in his hands, and he was accountable to none but the Subah himself.

Though these arrangements, made by merchants, could not be very pleasant to the court of Delhi, they were not much afraid of its resentment. The emperor, being

being in want of men and money, which the Subahs, the Nabobs, the Rajas, his meanest delegates, took upon themselves to refuse him, found himself assaulted on all sides.

The Rajaputes, the descendants of those Indians whom Alexander fought, being driven out of their lands by the Moguls, took shelter in some mountains that are almost inaccessible. Continual disturbances put it out of their power to think of conquests; but, in the intervals of their dissensions, they make inroads that cannot fail of harassing an empire already exhausted.

The Patans are still more formidable enemies. Driven by the Moguls from most of the thrones of Indostan, they have taken refuge at the foot of mount Imais, which is a branch of the Caucasus. That situation has strangely altered their manners, and given them a fierceness of temper which they had not in a milder climate. War is their chief employment. They serve alike under the banners of Indian or Mahomedan princes: but their obedience is not equal to their valour. Whatever crime they may have been guilty of, it is dangerous to punish them; for they are so vindictive, that they will murder when they are weak, and revolt when they are strong enough to attempt a bold stroke. Since the reigning power has lost its strength, the nation has shaken off the yoke. Not many years ago, their generals carried on their ravages as far as Delhi, and dreadfully plundered that capital.

To the north of Indostan is a nation, but lately known, which is the more formidable for being a new enemy. This people, distinguished by the name of Scheiks, have found means to free themselves from the chains of despotism and superstition, tho' surrounded by nations of slaves. They are said to be followers of a philosopher of Thibet, who inspired them with some notions of liberty, and taught them Theism, without any mixture of superstition. They first appeared in the beginning of the present century, but were then considered rather as a sect than as a nation. During the calamities of the Mogul empire, their number increased considerably by apostates of all religions, who joined with them, and sought shelter amongst them from the oppressions and fury of their

their tyrants. To be admitted into that society, nothing more is required than to swear implacable hatred against monarchy. It is asserted that they have a temple with an altar, on which stands their code of laws, and next to it a sceptre and a dagger. Four old men are elected, who occasionally consult the law, which is the only supreme power this republic obeys. The Scheiks are actually in possession of the whole province of Punjal, the greatest part of the Moultan and the Sindi, both banks of the Indus, from Caffimere to Tatta, and all the country towards Delhi, from Lahor to Serhend. They can raise an army of sixty thousand good cavalry.

But of all the enemies of the Mogul, none are, perhaps, so dangerous as the Marattas. This nation, of late so famous, so far as the obscurity of their origin and history will allow us to conjecture, possessed several provinces of Indostan, where they had been driven by the fear or the arms of the Moguls. They took refuge in the mountains which extend from Surat to Goa, and there formed several tribes, which, in process of time, united into one state, of which Satarah was the capital.

Most of them carried vice and licentiousness to all the excesses which might be expected from an ignorant people, who have cast off the yoke of prejudices, without substituting wholesome laws and sound learning in their stead. Tired of laudable and peaceful occupations, they thought of nothing but rapine. Yet this was confined to the plundering of a few villages, and robbing of some caravans till the coast of Coromandel, being threatened by Aurengzebe, made them sensible of their strength, by imploring their assistance.

Then it was that they were seen coming out of their hiding places in the rocks, riding on small ugly horses, but stout, and accustomed to hard fare, to difficult roads, and to excessive fatigue. The whole accoutrement of a Maratta horseman consisted of a turban, a girdle, and a cloak. His provisions were a little bag of rice, and a leather bottle full of water. His only weapon was an excellent sabre.

Notwithstanding the assistance of these barbarians, the Indian princes were forced to bend to the yoke of Aurengzebe; but the conqueror, weary of contending with irregular

irregular troops, which were continually ravaging the newly reduced provinces, determined to conclude a treaty, that would have been dishonourable, had it not been dictated by necessity, which is stronger than prejudices, oaths, and laws. He ceded for ever to the Marattas the fourth part of the revenues of the Deccan, a Subahship, formed out of all his usurpations in the peninsula.

This kind of tribute was regularly paid as long as Aurengzebe lived. After his death, it was granted or refused according to circumstances. The levying of it brought the Marattas in arms to the most distant parts from their mountains. Their boldness increased during the anarchy of Indostan. They have made the empire tremble; they have deposed monarchs; they have extended their frontiers; they have granted their protection to Rajas and Nabobs who strove to be independent, and their influence has been unbounded.

Whilst the court of Delhi was with difficulty contending with so many enemies, all conspiring to effect its ruin, M. de Bussy, who, with a small corps of French troops, and an army of Indians, had conducted Salabat-zing to Aurengabad his capital, laboured with success to establish him on the throne where he had placed him. The imbecillity of the prince, the conspiracies which it occasioned, the restlessness of the Marattas, the firmanas or privileges which had been granted to rivals, and other impediments, obstructed, but could not overturn his projects. By his means, the prince reigned more peacefully under the protection of the French than could have been expected, considering the circumstances of his situation; and he preserved him in an absolute independence on the head of the empire.

Chundesaeb, appointed Nabob of the Carnatic, was not in so happy a situation. The English, ever in opposition to the French, had stirred him up a rival, named Mohammed-Ali-Khan. The names of those two princes served as a pretence for carrying on a brisk war between the two nations: they fought for glory, for wealth, to serve the passions of their respective commanders, Dupleix and Saunders. Victory declared alternately for both armies. Success would not have been so fluctuating,

had

had the governor of Madras had more troops, or the governor of Pondicherry better officers. It was difficult to conjecture which of these two men, who were both of the same inflexible temper, would, in the end, get the better; but it was very certain that neither would submit, whilst he had a soldier or a rupee left. Nor was it likely that either of them would soon be reduced to this extremity, notwithstanding their amazing efforts, because they both found such resources in their hatred and their genius, as even the most able men could not have formed any conception of. It was evident, that the disturbances in the Carnatic would not cease, unless peace was first settled in Europe; and it was to be feared, that the flame, which had been confined to India for six years, might spread farther. The ministers of France and England obviated this danger, by enjoining the two companies to fix certain terms of agreement. They made a conditional treaty, which began by suspending all hostilities at the commencement of the year 1755, and was to end by establishing between them a perfect equality of territory, of strength, and of trade, on the coasts of Coromandel and Orixa. This stipulation had not yet received the sanction of the Courts of London and Versailles, when greater interests kindled a fresh war between the two nations *.

THE

* The news of this great flame, which, from North America, had communicated itself to every part of the globe, arrived at India at a time when the situation of the English was very ticklish, and might become still more so. For some time, a very pernicious custom had been introduced into these remote countries. Every governor, of whatever European settlement, was in the practice of giving sanctuary to the natives who were under the apprehension of being oppressed or punished. The sums, often very considerable, which they received as the price of their protection, made them shut their eyes to the danger to which they exposed the interests of their constituents. One of the principal officers in Bengal, who knew this resource, fled for refuge to the English at Calcutta, in order to escape the punishment his breach of trust well deserved. He was received with every mark of distinction, in proportion to the presents his immense riches enabled him to offer. The Subah, offended as he ought to have been, put himself at the head of his army, made an attack upon the place; and, having carried it, he ordered the garrison to be thrown into a confined narrow dungeon, where they were mostly suffocated in two hours, only twenty-three remaining alive. Large sums of money were

THE news of this great contention, which began in North America, and spread all over the world, reached the East Indies at a time when the English were engaged in a very troublesome war with the Subah of Bengal. Had

*Wars between
the English and
French. The
French lose all
their settle-
ments.*

the French been then in the same state they were some years before, they would have united their interests with those of the natives. From narrow views and ill-judged interests, they were desirous of entering into a formal convention to secure the neutrality which had subsisted on the banks of the Ganges, during the last disturbances. Their rival amused them with the hopes of settling this regulation, so long as he wanted to keep them in a state of inaction. But, so soon as their successes had enabled them to make their own terms, they attacked Chandernagore. The taking of this place was followed by the ruin of all the factories dependent upon it, and put the English in a condition to send men, money, provisions, and ships to the coast of Coromandel, where the French were just arrived with considerable land and sea forces.

These forces, destined to protect the settlements of their own nation, and destroy those of the enemy, were more than sufficient to answer both those purposes. The only point was to make a proper use of them; but they

set

were offered by these unhappy men to the guard which was placed at the gate of the prison, to prevail on them to acquaint the Prince of their situation. Their cries and groans reached the ears of the people, who were moved by them; but no person would go to speak to the Subah. "He is asleep," said they to the dying Englishmen; and there was not a man in Bengal who thought that, to save the life of a great number of unhappy people, it was incumbent on them to deprive their tyrant of one moment's sleep.

Admiral Watson, who arrived soon after in India, and Colonel Clive, who was much distinguished in the Carnatic war, delayed not to avenge the injury offered to their country. They collected together all the dispersed and fugitive English, went up the Ganges in the month of December 1756, retook Calcutta, made themselves masters of many other places, and in the end gained a complete victory over the Subah, whom they obliged to submit to a disgraceful treaty.

set out wrong, as will plainly appear from the following observations.

Before the commencement of the war, the Company possessed, on the coasts of Coromandel and Orixa, Masulipatam with five provinces; a large space round Pondicherry, which had long been but a slip of sand; a domain nearly as large in the neighbourhood of Karikal; and lastly, the island of Seringham. These possessions made four vast tracts of country, too far distant to support each other. They bore the marks of the wild fancy and extravagant imagination of Dupleix, who had made these acquisitions.

The error of this policy might have been corrected. Dupleix, who made amends for his defects by his great qualities, had brought matters to that pitch that he was offered the perpetual government of the Carnatic. It was the most flourishing province in all the Mogul empire. By singular and fortunate circumstances, it had been governed successively by three Nabobs of the same family, who had been equally attentive to culture and industry. General felicity had been the fruit of this mild and generous behaviour, and the public revenues had amounted to twelve millions *. A sixth part would have been given to Salabatzing, and the rest would have been for the Company.

If the ministry and the directors, who alternately supported and neglected their power in India, had but been capable of a firm and settled resolution, they might have sent orders to their agent to give up all the remote conquests, and to keep to that important settlement. It was alone sufficient to give the French a firm establishment, a close and contiguous state, a prodigious quantity of merchandise, provisions for their fortified towns, and revenues capable of maintaining a body of troops, which would have put them in a condition to defy the jealousy of their neighbours, and the hatred of their enemies. Unfortunately for them, the Court of Versailles ordered that the Carnatic should be refused, and affairs remained as they were before that proposal.

The situation was critical. Dupleix was, perhaps, the only

* 525,000 L

only man who could support himself in it, or, in his stead, the famous officer who had had the greatest share of his confidence, and was best acquainted with his schemes. The contrary opinion prevailed. Dupleix had been recalled. The general, who was appointed to conduct the Indian war, imagined he must demolish a structure which ought only to have been propped up in those troublesome times, and he loudly proclaimed his intentions, and thereby added to the imprudence of his resolutions.

That man, whose ungovernable temper could never adapt itself to circumstances, had received from nature no qualities that fitted him for command. He was governed by a gloomy, impetuous, and irregular imagination; so that there was a perpetual contrast between his conversation and his projects, and between his actions and his proceedings. Passionate, suspicious, jealous, and positive to excess, he created an universal diffidence and disjunction, and excited animosities never to be suppressed. His military operations, his civil government, his political combinations, all bore evident marks of the confusion of his ideas.

The evacuation of the island of Seringham was the principal cause of the disasters that attended the war with Tanjour. Masulipatam, and the northern provinces, were lost, from having given up the alliance of Salabatzing. The lesser powers of the Carnatic, who no longer respected the French for the sake of their old friend the Subah of the Decan, completed the general ruin, by espousing other interests.

On the other hand, the French squadron, though superior to the English, with which it had engaged three several times, without gaining any advantage over it, at last was obliged to leave it master of the seas, by which the loss of India was decided. Pondicherry, after struggling with all the horrors of famine, was forced to surrender on the 15th January 1761. Lally had, the day before, corrected a plan of Capitulation drawn up by the Council. He had named deputies to carry it to the enemy's camp; and, by a contradiction that was characteristic of the man, but the consequences of which were fatal; he gave the deputies a letter for the English Ge-

neral, in which he told him, *He would have no capitulation, because the English were that kind of people that they would not adhere to it.*

In taking possession of the place, the conqueror caused not only the troops that had defended it, but all the French in the Company's service, to be shipped off for Europe ; and, not satisfied even with that revenge, they destroyed Pondicherry, and reduced that noble city to a heap of ruins.

Those of the inhabitants who were sent over to France, came thither enraged at having lost their fortunes, and seen their houses pulled down as they drew off from the shore. They filled Paris with their clamours ; they devoted their governor to the indignation of the public ; they informed against him, as the author of all their miseries, and the sole cause of the loss of a flourishing colony. Lally was taken up and tried by the Parliament. He had been accused of high treason and extortion ; the first of these accusations was found to be absolutely false, and the second was never proved ; yet Lally was condemned to lose his head.

Let us ask, in the name of humanity, what his crime was that it should be punishable by law ? The awful sword of justice was not put into the hands of the magistrate to gratify private resentment, or even to follow the emotions of public indignation. The law alone must point out its own victims ; and if the clamours of a blind and incensed multitude could sway with the judges to pronounce a capital sentence, the innocent might suffer for the guilty, and there would be no safety for the citizen. In this point of view let us examine the sentence.

It declares, that Lally stands convicted of *having betrayed the interests of the King, of the state, and of the India Company.* What is meant by *betraying of interests?* What law is there that makes it death to be guilty of this vague and indefinite crime ? No such law either does or can exist. The disgrace of the prince, the contempt of the nation, public infamy, these are the proper punishments for the man, who, from incapacity or folly, has not served his country as he ought ; but death, and that too upon a scaffold, is destined for crimes of a different nature.

The sentence further declares, that Lally stands convicted

victed of vexations, exactions, and abuse of authority. No doubt he was guilty of these in numberless instances. He made use of violent means to procure pecuniary aids; but this money was put into the public treasure. He vexed and oppressed the citizens; but he never attempted to take away their lives or to injure their honour. He erected gibbets in the market-place, but caused no one to be executed upon them.

In reality, he was a madman, of a dark and dangerous cast; an odious and despicable man; a man totally incapable of command. But he was neither guilty of public extortions, nor treason; and to use the expression of a philosopher, whose virtues do honour to humanity, *every one had a right to kill Lally except the executioner.*

THE misfortunes that befel the French in Asia had been foreseen by all confederate men, who reflected on the corruption of the nation. Their morals had degenerated chiefly in the voluptuous climate of the Indies. The wars which Dupleix had carried on in the inland parts had laid the foundation of many fortunes. They were increased and multiplied by the gifts which Salabatzing lavished on those who conducted him triumphant into his capital, and settled him on the throne. The officers, who had not shared the dangers, the glory, and the benefits of those brilliant expeditions, sought to comfort themselves under their misfortune, by reducing the Sipahis to half the number they were allowed, and applying their pay to their own benefit, which they could easily do, as the money went through their hands. The agents for trade, who had not these resources, accounted to the Company but for a very small part of the profits made upon the European goods they sold, though they ought to have been all their own, and sold them those of India at a very high price, which they ought to have had at prime cost. Those who were intrusted with the administration of some possession, farmed it themselves under Indian names, or let it for a trifle, upon receiving a handsome gratuity; they even frequently kept back the whole income of such estates, un-

*Causes of the
misfortunes of
the French.*

der pretence of some imaginary robbery or devastation, which had made it impossible to recover it. All undertakings, of what nature soever, were clandestinely agreed upon : they were the prey of the persons employed in them, who had found means to make themselves formidable, or of such as were most in favour, or richest. The solemn abuse that prevails in India, of giving and receiving presents on the conclusion of every treaty, had multiplied these transactions without necessity. The navigators who landed in those parts, dazzled with the fortunes which they saw increased fourfold from one voyage to another, no longer regarded their ships, but as they were a vehicle to waft them to traffic and wealth. Corruption was carried to its greatest height by people of rank, who had been disgraced and ruined at home ; but who, being encouraged by what they saw, and by the reports that were brought to them, resolved to go themselves into Asia, in hopes of retrieving their shattered fortunes, or of being able to continue their irregularities with impunity. The personal conduct of the directors made it necessary for them to wink at all these disorders. They were accused of attending to nothing in their office but the credit, the money, and the power it gave them. They were accused of giving the most important posts to their own relations, men of no morals, application, or capacity. They were accused of multiplying the number of factors, without necessity and without bounds, to secure friends in the city and at court. Lastly, they were accused of furnishing themselves with what would have been bought cheaper and better in other places. Whether the government did not know of these excesses, or had not resolution enough to put a stop to them, they were, by their blindness or their weakness, in some measure accomplices in the ruin of the affairs of the nation in India. They might even, without injustice, be charged with being the principal cause of them, by sending such improper persons to manage and defend an important colony, which had no less to fear from its own corruption than from the English fleets and armies.

THE disasters of the Company abroad were still aggravated by their situation at home. It was immediately thought adviseable to lay a fair account of matters before the proprietors. This discovery alarmed them exceedingly, and gave rise to a hundred different schemes, all equally absurd. They hastily passed from one to another; but were too full of uncertainty and dissidence to adopt any. The deliberations were carried on with too much asperity, and precious moments were wasted in upbraiding and invectives. No one could foresee where these commotions would end, when a young merchant, of quick parts and a clear head, arose. They listened to him; when the storm immediately subsided, and fresh hopes began to dawn. All were unanimous in adopting his opinion. The Company, which the enemies to all exclusive privileges wished to see abolished, and which so many parties had conspired to ruin, stood its ground; but it was put upon a better footing; a circumstance which was absolutely necessary.

*Steps taken in
France to re-
establish affairs
in India.*

Amongst the causes which had involved the Company in this distress, there was one which had long been looked upon as the source of all the rest; which was the dependence, or rather the slavery, in which the government had kept that great body for near half a century past.

Ever since the year 1723, the court enjoyed the power of chusing the directors. In 1730, a commissary from the king was introduced into the administration of the Company. This put an end to all freedom of debate in their deliberations; there was no longer any connection between the administrators and the proprietors; no immediate intercourse between the administrators and government. All was directed by the influence, and according to the views of the courtier. Secrecy, that dangerous veil of an arbitrary administration, concealed all their operations; and it was but in 1744, that the proprietors were called together. They were empowered to name Syndics, and to call a general meeting once a year; but they were not the better informed of their affairs, nor more at liberty to direct them. The power of chusing the directors was still vested in the crown;

and, instead of one commissary, the king chose to have two.

This gave birth to two parties. Each Commissary had his own scheme, his own favourites, and strove to carry his own points. Hence arose divisions, intrigues, informations, and animosities, which had their centre at Paris, but spread as far as India, and there broke out in a manner so fatal to the nation.

The ministry, shocked at the sight of so many abuses, and weary of those endless contests, sought for a remedy. It was imagined they had hit upon one, by appointing a third commissary. This expedient only served to increase the mischief. Despotism had reigned when there was but one; division when there were two; but, from the moment there were three, all was anarchy and confusion. They reduced them to two, and endeavoured to make them agree as well as they could; and there was even but one in 1764, when the proprietors desired that the Company might be reinstated in its original constitution, by restoring its freedom.

They ventured to tell the government, they might impute the disasters and errors of the Company to themselves, as the proprietors had not been concerned in the management of their affairs: That they could never be carried on to the greatest advantage either for them or for the state, till this could be done with freedom, and till an immediate intercourse was established between the proprietors and administrators, and between the administrators and the ministry: That whenever there was an intermediate person, the orders given on one side, and the reports made on the other, would necessarily, in passing through his hands, take a tincture of his own private views and personal will; so that he would always be, in fact, the true and sole administrator of the Company: That such an administrator, often destitute of interest, or knowledge of business, would always be ready to sacrifice the welfare and true interest of trade, to the transient shew of his administration, and to the favour of place-men: That, on the contrary, every thing might be expected from a free administration chosen by the proprietors, acting under their inspection, and in concert with them, and subject to no sort of restraint.

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The government was sensible of the truth of these reasons. They secured the freedom of the Company by a solemn edict; and the same gentleman, who, by his genius, had just given it a new existence, drew up a plan of temporary statutes for a new form of administration.

The intention of these statutes was, that the Company might no longer be ruled by men, who often were not worthy to be its factors: that the government might no further interfere than to protect it: that it might be alike preserved from that slavery under which it had so long groaned, and from that spirit of mystery which had perpetuated its corruption: that there should be a constant intercourse between the managers and the proprietors: that Paris, deprived of the advantage enjoyed by the capitals of other commercial nations, of being a seaport, might acquire a knowledge of trade in free and peaceable assemblies: that the citizen might at last form just notions of that powerful tie that links all nations together, and, by informing himself of the sources of public prosperity, learn to respect the merchant whose operations contribute to it, and to despise the professions that are destructive of it.

These wise regulations were attended with happier consequences than could possibly be expected. A great activity was observed in every department. During the five years that the new administration lasted, the sales produced annually 18,000,000*. They had not been so considerable, even in those times which had been looked upon as the most prosperous; for, from 1726 to 1756 inclusively, they had amounted to no more than 437,376,284 livres †, which makes, upon an average in peace and war, 14,108,912 livres ‡ a-year.

It must be confessed, that, since the year 1764, the profits had not been what they were before. The difference between the purchase and the sale, which had been at least *cent. per cent.*, was reduced to about seventy *per cent.*. This diminution of profit was owing to the want of stock, to the ruin of French credit in India, and to the exorbitant power of the victorious nation that had lately subdued those distant regions. The agents for the Com-

pany

* 787,500l. † 19,135,212l. 8s. 6d. ‡ 617,264l. 18s.

pany were reduced to procure money and goods upon the hardest terms. They drew both from the English merchants, who were endeavouring to bring over to Europe the immense fortunes they had amassed in Asia.

With these impediments, and under these disagreeable circumstances, was the exclusive privilege of trading to the East Indies exercised, when the government thought proper to suspend it. Let us now examine what was then the situation of the Company *.

*These measures
are insufficient.
The trade of in-
dividuals is sub-
stituted to that
of the Company.
State of that so-
ciety at the time
of its decay.*

BEFORE 1764, the number of shares was 50,268. At that period the ministry, who, in 1746, 1747, and 1748, had given up to the proprietors the produce of the shares and bonds which were their property, relinquished in their favour the shares and bonds themselves, to the number of 11,835, together, to indemnify them for the expences they incurred during the last war. These shares having been cancelled, there remained but 38,432.

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* The consequences which followed these regulations seemed to justify their prudence. In the course of four years, during this reign of liberty, the new administration liquidated and paid, one half in bills, the other half in cash, sixty millions of the debt contracted in India during the last war, or even during former periods. Four expeditions were made, one after another, by means of which their tales were raised successively to a height equal, or even above what they had ever reached, even when the Company was in their greatest glory.

The first sale, in 1766, amounted to the neat sum of 14,798,336 livres (647,427 l. 4s.); —the second, in 1767, to 16,913,826 livres (739,979 l. 17 s. 9d.); —and the third, in 1768, to 24,006,505 livres (1,050,284 l. 12 s. 9d.). In all, to 55,717,668 livres, or 2,437,647 l. 19s. 6d.

On the other hand, salutary regulations were made respecting the different factories, and order and economy re-established throughout all the departments of the administration. But this first success, which exceeded the expectations of the proprietors, and of the public, has not occasioned any essential alteration in the state of the Company. Of this a judgment may be easily formed, from an accurate and particular description of their present situation.

The wants of the Company obliged them to make a call of 400 livres * per share. Upwards of 34,000 shares paid the call. The 4000 that did not, were reduced, by the terms of the edict which empowered the Company to make it, to five-eighths of the value of those which had paid; so that, by this operation, the number was reduced to 36,920 whole shares and six-eighths.

The dividends on the shares of the French Company, is of all other companies, have varied according to circumstances. In 1722, it was 100 livres †. From 1723 to 1745, it was 150 ‡. From 1746 to 1749, it was 70 ||. From 1750 to 1758, it was 80 §. From 1759 to 1763, it was 40 ‡; and in 1765, it was but 20 livres **. This shews that the dividend, and the value of the stock, which always kept pace with it, was necessarily affected by the hazards of trade, and the fluctuation of popular opinion. Hence that prodigious rise and fall in the price of the shares, which fell in one year from two hundred ††, to one hundred pistoles ‡‡, then rose to 1800 livres ||||, and soon after fell to 700 §§. Yet, in the midst of these revolutions, the stock of the Company was almost always the same. But this is a calculation which the public never makes; it is determined by the circumstance of the present moment; and their hopes and fears always go beyond the truth.

The proprietors, who were exposed to the mortification of seeing their fortunes reduced to one half in a single day, would no longer run the risques of such a situation. In laying in a fresh stock to trade with, they wished to secure the remainder of their fortune in such a manner, that the shares should at all times bear a settled price, and an interest that could be depended on. The government settled this matter by an edict issued out in August 1764. The XIIITH article expressly says, that, to secure to the proprietors a settled income, independent of all future events of trade, a sufficient fund should be detached from that portion of the contract which was then free, to secure to every share a capital of 1600 livres *.

* 17l. 10s. † 4l. 7s. 6d. ‡ 6l. 11s. 3d. || 3l. 1s. 3d.
 § 3l. 10s. † 1l. 15s. ** 17s. 6d. ‡ 167l. 10s.
 ‡‡ 83l. 15s. N. B. Each pistole is reckoned at 16s. 9d.
 §§ 78l. 15s. §§ 30l. 12s. 6d.

livres *, and an interest of 80 livres †; and that neither that interest nor that capital should, in any case, or for any cause whatsoever, be answerable for such engagements as the Company might enter into after the date of this edit ‡.

The

* 70 l.

† 3 l. 10 s.

‡ Independent of these advantages, which ought not to admit of any alteration, and which have made the shares answerable for all the mortgaged debts of the Company, the proprietors have reserved to themselves a general interest in the stock and profits of their trade, whatever they should be. Shares, however, are not much valued. The public will have no confidence in an establishment that has been constantly under such bad management, and which has cost both government and the proprietors such immense sums, while similar establishments were elsewhere so flourishing as to be able to pay a great price for the favour of an exclusive privilege. To this consideration we may add another, which is of great weight in the opinion of some speculators. The stock of the Company, they say, has no other foundation than a credit, whether well or ill founded, upon the state. If the public treasury should happen to be so much sunk in debt as not to be in a condition, for a long space of time, to answer all their engagements, whatever obligation they may have come under to the Company will not be more respected than any other; of consequence, their shares ought not to be of a higher value than the King's funds. It is to no purpose to observe, that the minister, however great his embarrassments, is too much convinced of the importance of the trade to India, to ruin it altogether by a breach of faith. To this they answer, that the annuities paid to the proprietors have no connexion with this trade, which never was, nor ever will be carried on, but by the funds actually in circulation.

Without endeavouring to examine minutely into the principles upon which this opinion is founded, we shall here give a detail of the mortgaged debts of the Company.

For 10,345 bills remaining unpaid of what was borrowed in 1745, at 4 per cent. they pay an interest of 258,625 livres (11,314 l. 16 s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.); for the promises given to obtain the contract made in 1751 and 1755, an interest at 5 per cent. of 1,500,000 livres (65,625 l.);—for different promises to obtain the contract, since the 1764, an interest, at 4 per cent. of 964,985 livres (42,218 l. 1 s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.);—for 36,921 shares and 6-eighths, at 80 livres per share, 2,953,740 livres (129,226 l. 2 s. 6 d.) These annuities are perpetual, and make up a total of 5,677,350 livres, (248,384 l. 1 s. 3 d.) to be added to a capital of 118,371,946 livres.

The life-rent annuities are less considerable. For the lottery made in the 1724, the Company owe 1,146,368 livres (50,153 l. 12 s.);—for annuities granted upon two lives in 1748, 909,361 livres

(39,784 l.)

The Company therefore owed for 36,920 shares and six-eighths, at the rate of 80 livres * per share, an interest amounting

(39,784 l. 10 s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.);—in consequence of the lottery of 1765, 470,668 livres (20,591 l. 14 s. 6d.);—of money borrowed at 9 per cent. the same year, 419,102 livres (18,335 l. 14 s. 3d.);—for pensions or particular arrangements, 129,400 livres, (5,661 l. 5s.) The different annuities amounting in whole to the sum of 3,074,899 livres (134,526 l. 16 s. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.), which, added to 5,677,350 livres of perpetual annuities, (247,946 l. 11 s. 3d.), make the debt of the Company to amount to 8,752,249 livres (382,910 l. 17 s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.).

It follows from this calculation, that, by their contract of 180 millions, there remains to the Company a clear income of 247,751 livres (10,839 l. 2 s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.), which appears to be sufficient to answer the claims of some individuals, hitherto not fully ascertained, and the demands of the English Company for the maintenance of French prisoners during the last war.

Besides mortgages of perpetuities and liferents, the Company also have debts of two kinds, namely, the old debts, that is to say, those contracted before the 1st July 1764, amounting to 12,458,678 livres (545,067 l. 3s. 3d.); and the debts contracted since the 1st July 1764, amounting to 69,677,860 livres (3,048,406 l. 7 s. 6d.); making in all 82,136,538 livres, (3,593,473 l. 10 s. 9d.) But, on the other hand, the Company have in trade, or in funds, either in cash, or in debts to call in, 83,113,842 livres (3,636,230 l. 11 s. 9d.); a sum sufficient to balance both their old and new debts.

Their effects, moveable and immoveable, amount to about 20 millions of livres (875,000 l.). In these are included, their house at Paris; thirty vessels fit for sea; their buildings at l'Orient; their naval stores; 1349 blacks remaining in the Isles of France and Bourbon; the private buildings the Company have preserved in the two islands, and those which have been rebuilt in India. We have estimated all these particulars at their present value, without regard to what they cost.

A property of still more importance, is a fund of about 60 millions (2,625,000 l.) actually mortgaged at present by the contract of 180 millions (7,875,000 l.) in security for the payment of 3 millions of life-rent annuities (131,250 l.), which the Company presently pay. From the little attention we could give to the time that has elapsed since the sale of part of these annuities, we should think, that the property of these funds is at present worth at least 30 millions (1,312,500 l.), or 1,500,000 livres, (65,625 l.) of perpetual annuities.

By summing up the different articles which constitute the debit and credit of the Company, and valuing the different annuities at 10 per cent. it will be found, that the principal sum of

mortgaged

amounting to 2,953,660 livres*. They paid for their several contracts 2,727,506 livres†, which made in all 5,681,166 livres ‡ of perpetual annuities. The life annuities amounted to 3,074,899 livres ||. The sum total of all these annual payments was then 8,756,065 livres §. In what manner the Company raised money to answer these several demands, shall be the subject of our next inquiry.

That great body, far too deeply concerned in Law's scheme, had advanced him 90,000,000 of livres †. When the catastrophe happened, the government made over to them in payment the exclusive sale of tobacco, which then brought in three millions ** a-year; but they were left without a capital to trade upon. This kept them in a state of inaction till 1726, when the government came to their succour. The rapid progress they made astonished all nations, and they bid fair for surpassing the most flourishing companies. This opinion, which was the general one, emboldened the proprietors to complain that their dividends were not doubled and trebled. They thought, and so did the public, that the King's treasury was enriched with their spoils. The profound secrecy with which every thing was carried on, greatly strengthened these surmises.

The breaking out of the war between France and England, in 1744, dissolved the charm. The ministry, too much embarrassed in their own affairs to think of doing any thing for the Company, left it to shift for itself. Then, indeed, every body was surprized to see
that

mortgaged debts amounts to 149,120,936 livres (6,524,040 l. 19s.); and the other debts, old as well as new, to the sum of 82,136,536 livres (3,593,473 l. 9s.); so that their debit amounts to 231,257,474 livres (10,117,514 l. 9s. 9d.).

It will be found, on the other hand, that, by the contract of 180 millions, the funds the Company have in trade, or in stock, either in cash, or in debts to call in, amount to 83,113,842 livres (3,636,230 l. 11s. 9d.); and their moveable and immovable effects being computed at 20 millions (\$75,000 l.), the sum total is 283,113,842 livres (12,386,230 l. 11s. 9d.). By comparing these two sums, we shall find that the credit exceeds the debit 51,856,368 livres (2,268,716 l. 2s.).

* 129,222 l. 12s. 6d. † 119,328 l. 7s. 9d. ‡ 248,551 l. 3d.

|| 134,526 l. 10s. 7½ d. § 383,077 l. 16s. 10½ d. § 3,937,500 l.

** 131,250 l.

that Colossus ready to fall, which had never yet met with any shock, and whose greatest misfortune had been the loss of two ships of a moderate value*. The Company was undone, had not the government, in 1747, declared itself their debtor in the sum of 180,000,000 of livres †, and engaged to pay them the interest of that sum for ever, at five *per cent.* This engagement, which was in lieu of the exclusive sale of tobacco, is so important a point in history, that it would not be sufficiently elucidated, if we did not take up the matter further back.

The use of tobacco, which was introduced into Europe after the discovery of America, made no very rapid progress in France. The consumption was so small, that the first lease, which began the first of December 1674, and ended the first of October 1680, brought in but 500,000 livres † to the government the two first years, and 600,000 || the four last; though the right of stamping pewter had been joined to this privilege. This farm was confounded with the general farms till 1691, when it still remained united to them, and was rated at 1,500,000 livres § a-year. In 1697, it became once more a separate farm on the same terms, till 1709, when it was increased to 100,000 livres ¶ more, till 1715. It was then renewed for three years only. The two first years were to bring in 2,000,000 of livres *, and the last 220,000 † more. At that period, it was increased to 4,020,000 livres † a-year; but this lasted only from the first of October 1718 to the first of June 1720. Tobacco then became a mercantile commodity all over the kingdom, and continued so till the first of September 1721. During this short interval, private people laid in such a stock, that when it came to be fatigued out again, it could be done but at a moderate price. This lease, which was the eleventh, was for nine

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years,

* An enthusiasm to aggrandize, fortify, and embellish their settlements in Asia, and a fondness to make the port of l'Orient rival Brest and Fowey, had brought this Society to the brink of ruin, which, whatever members it might consist of, was, after all, neither more nor less than a trading company.

† 7,875,000 l.

† 21,875 l.

|| 26,250 l.

§ 65,625 l.

|| 4,375 l.

* 87,500 l.

† 9,625 l.

† 175,875 l.

years, to commence on the first of September 1721, the first of October 1730. The farmers were to give 1,300,000 livres* for the first thirteen months; 1,800,000 for the second year; 2,560,000 † for the third, and 3,000,000 ‡ for each of the last six years. This agreement did not take place, because the India Company, to whom the government owed 90,000,000 livres §, which had been deposited in the royal treasury in 1717, demanded the farm of tobacco, which had then been made over to them for ever, and which, from particular events, they had never yet enjoyed. Their petition was found to be just, and they obtained what they so warmly solicited.

They managed this farm themselves, from the first of October 1723, to the last day of September 1730. The produce during this space was 50,083,967 livres 11 sous 9 deniers †; which made 7,154,852 livres 10 sous 3 deniers ** a-year; out of this must be deducted yearly 3,042,673 livres 19 sous 6 deniers †† for the charges of preparing the land.

These charges were so enormous, that it was thought the business, which grew every day more considerable, would be better in the hands of the farmers-general, who would do it at less expence, by means of the clerks they employed for other purposes. The Company accordingly leased it for eight years. They engaged to pay 7,500,000 livres †† for each of the first four years, and 8,000,000 ‡‡ for each of the four last. This lease went on upon the same footing till the month of June 1747, and the king promised to account with the company for the increase of the produce, as soon as it should be known and ascertained.

At this period, the king united the tobacco farm to his other duties, creating and alienating, for the use of the Company, an annuity of nine millions §§ for ever, upon a capital of a hundred and eighty millions ††. This large compensation was thought to be due to them for the old debt of ninety millions *, for the overplus of the profit

* 56,875l. † 78,750l. ‡ 112,000l. || 131,250l.
§ 3,937,500L + About 2,191,173L 11s. 7d.

** About 3,13,024 .1 6s. †† About 133,116l. 19s. 7.

†† 328,125l. §§ 350,000l. §§ 393,750l.
†† 7,875,000l. * 3,937,500l.

profit upon the tobacco farm from 1738 to 1747, and to indemnify them for the expences of the negro trade, the losses they had sustained during the war, their giving up the exclusive privilege of the trade to St Domingo, and the loss of the ton duty, which had been suspended ever since the year 1731. Yet this compensation has been thought inadequate by some of the proprietors, who have found out, that, ever since the year 1758, upwards of 11,700,000 pounds weight of tobacco have been annually sold in the kingdom at three livres * a-pound, tho' it had been bought for twenty-seven livres † a hundred.

The nation is of a very different opinion. The managers who prevailed upon government to acknowledge so large a debt, have been accused of sacrificing the interest of the public to that of a private society. A writer who, in our days, should examine whether this accusation was well or ill grounded, would pass for an idle man ‡.

Such

* 2s. 7½d.

† 1l. 3s. 7½d.

‡ Perhaps we shall be forgiven for observing, that, had the patrons of the Company been less blinded by particular prejudices, they would have procured to the nation some indemnification for the immense debt contracted by it on their account. Nothing was more easy. It was only to deprive them of an odious monopoly, which made the caftor of Canada go into the hands of the English; to restore Senegal to the state, from whence no more was got annually than about 7 or 800 slaves; to free the government and trade of the extravagant duties paid to the Company for the liberty of trading to Guinea; in fine, to bring them back to the spirit of their institution, and to confine them to it, without suffering them to go beyond their bounds.

Those who have attended to the progress of the Company, know, that their trade was very inconsiderable in the last century. The accounts from which a computation can be made, bear, that from the 1664 to the 1684, the total did not exceed 9,500,000 livres (415,625l.) Their progress was less considerable afterwards, the sole ambition of France being to extend her territories. After the 1720, however, their trade began in several respects to increase; but it was not till five or six years after, that it became an object of importance. Their expectations were very sanguine, when two wars interrupted or defeated all their operations.

It is an established fact, that the whole sales made at l'Orient since the 1726 to 1756 inclusive, the period of the last war, amounted to no more than 437,376,284 livres (19,135,212l. 8s. 6d.) From the 1740 to the 1756, they have gained regularly,

Such a discussion would be altogether needless, since every circumstance of this transaction has been made public. It will be sufficient to observe, that it was with the nine millions * a-year improperly sacrificed by the state, that the Company was enabled to answer the demand of 8,756,065 livres † with which it was charged; so that the overplus that remained to them amounted to about 244,000 livres ‡ of net revenue.

It is true, they had private simple contract debts to the amount of 74,505,000 livres || ; but they had in trade, or

betwixt buying and selling, 102 per cent. so that, on the supposition the profits were always the same, their exportations of cash must of course be reduced to 216,522,912 livres, (9,472,877 l. 8s.) From this sum there will naturally fall to be subtracted the produce of the goods exported from Europe to Asia; but the broils in which the Company is involved, have made more money go out of the mother-country than the exportation of their goods has been able to bring in.

Were we inclined to inquire how much the annual trade of the Company has increased during that space of time, we should find, that it never exceeded 14,108,912 livres, (617,264 l. 18s.) Their returns of 24 millions (1,050,000l.) would have been hardly sufficient for the bare consumption of the kingdom, and they must have been much more considerable to have supplied the demands of the neighbouring states.

These important considerations well deserve the attention of government and of the proprietors, so soon as the return of peace allows France to resume her trade to India. This happy period is arrived; but the loss of all their settlements in India, and the events which preceded, as well as those which followed after, threw the minds of the proprietors into a state of despair, and this despair gave birth to a thousand schemes the most absurd. So great was their perplexity and distrust, that they run from one project to another, without being able to fix their attention on any one in particular. The time for action, which became every day more precious, was spent in reproaches and invectives; and animosity took the place of deliberation. No person could foresee where all these convulsions would end, till a young merchant, of a bold and enlightened genius, let them know. At his voice, the tumult ceases; hope revives their spirits; there is but one mind, and that is his own. The Company, which the enemies of all exclusive privileges wished to see abolished, and which the interest of so many individuals had conspired to ruin, is supported, and, what was indispensably necessary, is reformed.

* 393,750 l.

† 383,077 l. 16s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

‡ 10,675 l.

|| 3,259,593 l. 15s.

BOOK IV. EAST AND WEST INDIES. 101

or in debts to call in 70,733,000 livres * ; a sum nearly sufficient to balance these demands.

Their only riches consisted, therefore, in moveable and immoveable effects, to the amount of about twenty millions †, and the prospect of the extinction of the life-annuities, which in time must bring in three millions ‡ a-year. The actual value of this article might be reckoned equal to a clear capital of thirty millions ||.

Independent of these properties, the Company enjoyed some very beneficial rights. The exclusive sale of coffee had been granted them ; but, as public utility required that an exception should be made in 1736, with regard to coffee imported from the American islands, they had, by way of compensation, a yearly sum of 50,000 livres §, which was always duly paid. Even the privilege for Mocha coffee was cancelled in 1767, the government having allowed the importation of that of the Levant. The Company obtained no indemnification on this account.

They had met with a worse disappointment the year before. In 1720, they had been invested with the sole right of transporting slaves to the American colonies. This system soon appeared to be erroneous, and it was agreed, that all the merchants in the kingdom should be at liberty to carry on the slave-trade, upon condition of adding a pistole † per head to the thirteen livres ** granted out of the royal treasury. Supposing that 15,000 negroes were disposed of every year in the French islands, this made a clear income of 345,000 livres †† for the Company. This bounty which was allowed them for a trade they were not concerned in, was taken off in 1767, and was made up to them by a reasonable equivalent.

At the first formation of the Company, they had obtained a gratuity of 50 livres †† upon every ton of goods they should export, and of 75 |||| upon every ton they should import from abroad. The ministry, upon the suppression of the bounty upon negroes, increased the gratuity upon every ton exported to 75 livres ††, and upon every ton imported to 80 §§. If we rate both at

* 3,094,568L 15s. † 875,000L ‡ 131,250L || 1,312,500L
 § 2,187L 10s. †† 16s. 9d. ** 11s. 4½d. †† 15,093L 15s.
 †† 21 3s 9d. ||| 31 5s 7½d. †† 31 5s 7½d. §§ 31 10s.

6000 tons a-year, we shall find a produce of above a million * for the Company, including the 50,000 livres † they received upon the coffee.

Whilst the revenues of the Company remained entire, their expences were lessened. By the edict of 1764, the islands of France and Bourbon were become the property of the government, who engaged to fortify and defend them. By this arrangement the Company was exonerated of two millions £ a-year, without the least detriment to the exclusive trade they enjoyed in those two islands ||.

With

* 43,750l. † 2,187l. 10s. ‡ 87,500l.

|| Notwithstanding these advantages, the Company are in a languishing condition, and will continue so, for want of money and credit. The want of cash puts it out of their power to advance money in India to the merchants, and by their means to the manufacturers, who cannot carry on their business without such encouragement. Part of the year they remain idle. So soon, however, as funds arrive, they are distributed, and all hands are set to work in a hurry, every one at his proper business. The necessity of having their ships dispatched in proper time, makes them overlook any faults in the fabric of the goods. This negligence, which prejudices the French sales in Europe, is owing also to another cause. The impossibility they find, at the end of every agreement, to settle accounts with the furnishers of Indian commodities, necessarily puts it in the power of the latter to demand an interest of 12 per cent. on any balances that may be due.

This disorder will continue until the Company be in a situation to keep funds for advance in their factories; and it appears to be no easy matter, nay perhaps impossible for them, in their present situation, to procure them. Under a free government, more zeal on the part of the proprietors, and more confidence on the part of the public, might naturally have been expected; but neither the public, nor the proprietors, would chuse to lavish such considerable funds in a scheme of this nature, upon the faith of an administration which, ever since the new letters patent in the month of June 1768, neither could direct themselves, nor allow themselves to be directed by the proprietors, who, necessarily subject to the influence of a Commissary, had reason to dread the same disappointment in future, which they had experienced in times past. As their whole capital was swallowed up, either by the debts they had contracted, or by the engagements they had come under, happen what would, to make good to the proprietors a certain yearly revenue, they had no security to give to their creditors. We know, that, going strictly to work, they had it in their power to alienate whatever the extinction of the different

With all these seemingly prosperous circumstances, the debts of the Company were daily increasing. This must

different annuities left at their disposal, which, according to all probability, must amount annually to 50,000 livres (2,187*l.* 10*s.*); but we much doubt whether money holders would make any considerable advances on these mortgages.

If they endeavoured to tempt them with the alluring bait of a large interest, the suspicions, natural to these gentlemen, would immediately recur, when they began to consider the revolutions that had happened in trade, which forbid any further hopes of their reaping the same profits, and by reason of the obstacles of every kind which it had met with, which did not allow their sales to exceed 20 or 25 millions (875,000*l.* or 1,093,750*l.*) when they ought to have been carried the length of 30 or 35 (1,512,500*l.* or 1,531,250*l.*), in order to render the home consumption of Asiatic goods, as well as the exportation abroad, as extensive as in the nature of things was possible.

Their natural distrust would be further excited, by the obligation the Company have come under, by their exclusive privilege, to supply the isles of France and Bourbon with provisions; while these islands, if we except a million of coffee, having nothing to give in payment of the European goods sent them, but bills of exchange on the treasurers of the colonies, the consequence is, that the Company are under the necessity of making advances, one after another, of 12 or 15 millions (525,000*l.* or 656,250*l.*), and to get a credit on the King, which public contingencies render always uncertain, either from the nature of the thing itself, or the term of payment.

Another cause of distrust, and which is well-founded, arises from the enormity of the expences to which the Company is subjected. We pretend not to say that they are unnecessary, or that they are not even, in general, regulated with economy; but, according to the last returns that have been made, they amount to no less than 8 millions (350,000*l.*) a-year; and as the Company is burdened with the expences of the crown, they may even exceed that sum.

From all these considerations, we are of opinion, that if the King does not take upon himself the burden of the charges of the crown, make arrangements for rendering the supplying the isles of France and Bourbon less expensive to the Company, and insure to them of new, and more inviolably, all that liberty which is the essence of every commercial undertaking, the trade of the Company will decay every day, and in the end be annihilated. These changes, by which, at bottom, things are only brought back to their natural order, are become the more indispensable, in order that the Company may be put in a condition to surmount the obstacles of every kind which arise from her present situation in India.

must inevitably happen, as their income, together with the profits of their trade, was not sufficient to defray the expences of carrying it on, and the charges annexed to the crown, which together amounted to eight millions * a-year. They might even exceed this, as, by their nature, they were susceptible of endless increase, according to the political views of government, which is the sole judge of their importance and necessity.

In so unfortunate a situation, the Company could not possibly support itself without the assistance of government. But, for some time past, the council of Lewis XV. had appeared to be very indifferent about the existence of that great body. At last, an arret of council was issued, bearing date the 13th of August 1769, by which the king suspended the exclusive privilege of the India Company, and granted to all his subjects the liberty of navigating and trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope. However, in granting this unexpected freedom,

the

During some years, this Company have had immense possessions in Asia, which, upon the faith of their agents, they believed were a source of wealth that could never be dried up. They flattered themselves, that, however far they might chuse to extend their trade, they would be no more under the necessity of sending bullion to the East. It is, however, now demonstrable, that Candavir and the four Cerkers, which form the great territory from which they were in expectation of such immense treasures, have not returned, during the five years they have been possessed, but 13,773,466 rupees, though their administration or defence has cost no less than 14,999,684. The expence, therefore, has exceeded the revenue 1,226,218 rupees. To this must be added, the charges sustained by the Company, in the transportation and recruiting of men for these remote countries, and about 120,000 livres (5,250 l.) which they were obliged to pay to M. de Busley, whose negotiations, supported by the troops which he commanded, enabled him to acquire the first of these five provinces in 1752, and the four others in 1753.

The calculations we have given, the accuracy whereof no well-informed person will dispute, may console the Company for the loss they have sustained of this great acquisition, and of some others which were not less burdensome to them. The English have availed themselves of their superiority, to add it to the territory which was possessed before the 1749, which may be looked upon as a considerable advantage; but what is perhaps an irreparable misfortune, these settlements, when restored in 1763, were totally destroyed.

* 350,000 l.

the government thought proper to lay it under some restraint. The arrêt, which opens this new tract to private navigators, requires them to provide themselves with passports, which are to be given gratis by the administrators of the India Company. It obliges them to make their returns to Port l'Orient, and nowhere else. It establishes a duty, by way of Indulto, on all goods imported from India, which, by a second arrêt of Council, issued on the sixth of September following, was fixed at five *per cent.* on all goods coming from India and China, and at three *per cent.* upon all commodities of the growth of the islands of France and Bourbon.

The arrêt of the 13th of August, by only suspending the privilege of the Company, seemed to leave to the proprietors the power of resuming it; but, as they saw no probability of ever being able to do this, they wisely determined to liquidate their concerns in such a manner as to secure their creditors, and the remains of their own fortunes.

For this purpose they offered to give up to the king all the Company's ships, thirty in number; all the warehouses, and other buildings belonging to them, at Port l'Orient, and in India; the property of their factories, with the manufactures dependent on them; all naval and military stores; and, lastly, eight hundred slaves, which they had reserved in the islands. All these articles were valued at thirty millions * by the proprietors, who, at the same time, demanded the payment of 16,500,000 livres † which were due to them by the government.

The king agreed to the proposal, but chose to lessen the purchase-money, not that the effects were not of still greater value whilst they remained in the hands of the Company, but, being made over to the government, they brought an additional incumbrance upon it: so that instead of 46,500,000 livres †, which the proprietors demanded, the prince, to clear all accounts with them, created a perpetual annuity for the benefit of 1,200,000 livres ‡, upon a capital of thirty millions §. The edict, for that purpose was issued out in January 1770.

This new contract the Company mortgaged for twelve millions

* 1,312,500l. † 721,875l. ‡ 2,034,375l. || 52,500l.
§ 1,312,500l.

millions *, which they borrowed upon life-annuities at ten *per cent.* and by a lottery in February following. This money was borrowed to enable them to fulfil the engagements they had entered into when they undertook the last expedition; but it was insufficient: so that, finding themselves utterly unable to raise more, the proprietors, at their meeting on the 7th April 1770, made over their whole property to the king, except the capital that had been mortgaged to the shares.

The principal articles, comprised in the cession, consisted in the abolition of 4,200,000 livres † in life-annuities; of that part of the contract of nine millions ‡ which exceeded the capital of the shares; of the hotel of Paris; of the India goods expected home in 1770 and 1771, supposed to be worth 26,000,000 of livres ||; and, lastly, of three or four millions § of debts, to be called in from debtors who were mostly solvent, in India, the isles of France and Bourbon, and at San Domingo. The proprietors engaged at the same time to furnish the king with the sum of 14,678,000 livres ‡ to be raised by way of a call, which was fixed at 400 livres ** per share. The government, in accepting these several offers, engaged, on their part, to pay all the perpetual and life-annuities which the Company was bound to pay; all their other engagements, amounting to about forty-five millions ††; all the pensions and half-pays granted by the Company, amounting to 80,000 livres ‡‡ a-year; lastly, to stand to all the charges and risks attending a liquidation, that must necessarily last some years.

The king raised the capital of each share to 2500 livres §§, bearing interest at 125 livres ¶¶¶ a-year, which, by the edict in August 1764, had been fixed at 1600 livres ***, bearing an interest of 80 livres ¶¶. The new interest was made subject to a deduction of a tenth; and it was agreed, that this deduction should be annually appropriated to the paying off of the shares by lot, on the footing of their capital of 2500 livres †††; so that the interest

* 525,000 l. † 183,750 l. ‡ 393,750 l.

|| 1,137,500 l. § About 153,125 l. upon an average.
+ 642,162 l. 10s. ** 17 l. 10s. ¶ 1,968,750 l. ¶¶ 3,500 l.
§§ 109 l. 7s. 6d. ¶¶ 51. 9s. 4½ d. *** 70 l.
†† 31. 10s. ¶¶¶ 109 l. 7s. 6d.

terest on the shares thus paid off, would increase the sinking fund, till the whole of the shares was finally paid off.

These respective conditions are recorded in an arret of council, of the 8th of April, including a report of the deliberations held the day before in a general meeting of the proprietors, and confirmed by letters patent, bearing date the 22d of the same month. In consequence of these agreements, the call has been paid; the drawing for the reimbursement of the shares, to the number of two hundred and twenty, has been made every year; and the simple contract-debts of the Company have been duly paid, when their time was elapsed.

From all these particulars, it is no easy matter to form an idea of the actual mode of existence of the India Company, and of the legal state of the trade they carried on. This Company, which at present has no property, no business, no object, cannot, however, be considered as being utterly destroyed, since the proprietors have reserved the joint stock that was mortgaged for their shares; and that they have a common chest, and deputies to superintend their interests. On the other hand, their charter has been suspended; but it is only suspended, and is not included amongst the articles which the Company has ceded to the king. The law, by which it was granted, is still in force; and the ships that are fitted out for the Indian seas, cannot sail without a permission in the name of the Company. So that the freedom which has been granted is but a precarious one; and, if the proprietors should offer to resume their trade, with a sufficient stock to carry it on, they would have an incontestable right to do it, without any new law to empower them. But, except this nominal right, which in fact is much the same as if it did not exist, as the proprietors are not in a condition to exercise it, all their other rights, properties, and factories, are now in the hands of government. Let us take a cursory view of those settlements, beginning by Malabar.

BETWEEN the provinces of Canara and Calicut lies a district which extends eighteen leagues along the coast, and is at most seven or eight leagues broad. The country, which is very rugged, is cover-

*Present state
of the French
upon the coast
of Malabar.*

ed with pepper and cocoa-trees. It is divided into several lesser districts, in subjection to as many India lords, who are all vassals to the house of Colastray. The head of this Bramin family is always to confine his whole attention to what concerns the worship of the gods. I would be beneath his dignity to stoop to profane matters, and the reins of government are given to his nearest relation. The country is divided into two provinces. In the largest, called the Irouvenate, is the English factory of Tellichery, and the Dutch factory of Cananor. Those two nations share the pepper between them; but the English commonly carry off 1,500,000 pound weight, and there seldom remains more than 500,000 for the Dutch.

The second province, called Cartenate, extends but five leagues along the coast. Here the French were called in by the natives in 1722, with a view to make use of them against the English; but an accommodation having taken place, made their assistance needless, and they were forced to relinquish a post where they promised themselves some advantages. Fired with resentment and ambition, they returned in great numbers, in 1725, and established themselves sword in hand on the mouth of the river Mahé. Notwithstanding this act of violence, they obtained of the prince who governed that district an exclusive right to the pepper trade. This favour was so great an advantage to them, that it gave rise to a colony of 6000 Indians, who cultivated 6350 cocoa, 5967 areka, and 7762 pepper trees. Such was the state of this settlement, when the English made themselves masters of it in 1760.

The same spirit of destruction that they had shewn in all their conquests, influenced them at Mahé. Their intention was to pull down the houses, and disperse the inhabitants. The sovereign of that country dissuaded them from their purpose. All was spared except the fortifications. When the French returned to their factory, they found every thing much in the same condition as they had left it. It is their interest to secure the advantages they enjoy, and it is no less incumbent on them to endeavour to improve them.

Mahé is surrounded with hills, on which were erected five

five forts, which no longer exist. These works were by far too numerous, tho' some precautions are absolutely necessary. It is not proper to be perpetually exposed to the depredations of the Nayers, who have formerly attempted to plunder and destroy the colony, and who might possibly have still the same intentions, in order to put themselves under the protection of the English at Tellicherry, which is but three leagues distant from Mahé.

Besides the posts requisite for internal safety, it is highly proper to fortify the entrance of the river. Since the Marattas have got sea-ports of their own, they infest the sea about Malabar with their piracies. Those banditti even attempt to land, wherever they think there is some booty to be got. Mahé would not be secure from their attacks, if there were money or goods to tempt them, unless they were well guarded.

The French might make themselves ample amends for any expences they should incur, if they did but carry on their trade with spirit and skill. Their factory is the best situated for the pepper trade; and the country would afford 2,500,000 poundweight of that commodity. What could not be consumed in Europe might be sold in China, on the Red Sea, and at Bengal. A pound of pepper would cost them twelve sous *, and they would sell it for twenty-five or thirty †.

This advantage, considerable as it is, would be increased by the profits upon European goods, which would be carried over to Mahé. Those who are best acquainted with that factory are of opinion, that it will be an easy matter to dispose of 400,000 weight of iron, 200,000 of lead, 25,000 of copper, 2000 firelocks, 20,000 weight of gunpowder, 50 anchors or grapplings, 50 bales of cloth, 50,000 ells of fail cloth, a good quantity of quicksilver, and about 200 casks of wine or brandy, every year, for the French settled in the colony, or for the English in the neighbourhood. These several articles together would bring, at least, 384,000 livres ‡, of which 153,600 || would be clear gain, allowing the profit to be 40 per cent. Another advantage attending this cir-

* About 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. † About 11. 4s. on an average.

‡ 16,800 l. || 6720 l.

culation is, that there will always be a stock in the factory, which will enable them to purchase the productions of the country in the seasons of the year when they are cheapest.

The greatest obstacle to trade is the custom-house established in the colony. Half the duties belong to the sovereign of that country, and this has always been a subject of contention. The English of Tellicherry, who laboured under the same grievance, have found means to prevent all disputes about these duties, by paying certain yearly sum as an equivalent. We might do the same; but we cannot expect that the prince would agree to it, unless we previously pay him the sums he has lent, and no longer refuse him the tribute stipulated for the benefit of living peaceably upon his territories. Matters cannot be so easily adjusted at Bengal.

Present State of the French at Bengal. FRANCE has engaged, by the treaty of 1763, to erect no fortifications, and keep no troops in that rich and extensive country. The English, who are sovereigns there, will never suffer us to deviate from what they have required. So that Chandernagore, which, before the last war, reckoned 60,000 souls, and has now but 24,000, is and always will be entirely an open place.

To this misfortune of a precarious situation, may be added injuries and hardships of every kind. Not satisfied with the possession of unlimited authority, the English have been guilty of the most scandalous enormities. They have insulted the French in their work-shops, destroyed their workmen, cut the linens off the looms, inflicted that the manufacturers should do no work but for them, in the three most favourable months of the year, and that their own ladings should be picked out and completed, before any thing was removed out of the workshops. The scheme which the French and Dutch together had contrived, of making an exact estimate of the number of weavers, taking only half between them, and leaving the rest to the English, has been considered as an insult. That domineering nation have gone so far as to declare, that they would have their factors buy the goods in Chandernagore; and our people have been forced

ced to submit to this hardship, or they would have been excluded from every market in Bengal. In a word, they have so much abused the unjust right of victory, that a philosopher might be tempted to wish for the ruin of their liberty, were not the people a thousand times more oppressive and cruel under the government of one man, than in the possessions of a government tempered by the influence of many *.

As long as things remain upon the present footing in that opulent part of Asia, the French will meet with perpetual hardships and mortifications; and therefore, no solid and lasting advantage can accrue to trade. We should be rescued from this disgrace, if we could exchange Chandernagore for Chatiigan.

Chattigan is situated on the confines of Aracan. The Portuguese, who, in the days of their prosperity, endeavoured to get all the important posts in India into their own hands, made a considerable settlement at that place. The colonists shook off the yoke of their native country, when it became a province of Spain, chusing rather to turn pirates than to be slaves. They long infested the neighbouring coasts and seas with their depredations. At last they were attacked by the Moguls, who raised a colony upon their ruins, powerful enough to prevent any inroads which the people of Aracan and Pegu might be tempted to make into Bengal. This place

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then

* The means used by the agents of the French Company, to combat so many difficulties, are certainly very wise. They have thrown off the dealing with Indian merchants, with whom they had contracted on extravagant terms, and have substituted in their place men of character, who furnish them with goods at the manufacturer's price; or upon a commission of 3 per cent. They have secured to the Company, whose affairs they conduct, the cloths that are made even in Chandernagore, and which branch was formerly given up in favour of individuals, though an object of the greatest importance. In fine, they have endeavoured to lessen the impositions, and fulfil the orders which came from Europe, by purchasing from the principal merchants of the English factories, a part of what they should have sent home. With all these precautions, the cargoes that come to France are dear, slight, late, and of a bad quality; and the Company will be under the necessity of abandoning Bengal, where they must be ruined, unless they exchange Chandernagore with Chattigan.

then sunk into obscurity, till 1758, when the English established a settlement there.

The climate is healthy, the waters excellent, and provisions plenty: the landing is easy, and the anchorage safe. The continent and the island of Sandiva make tolerable harbour. The rivers Barramputri and Etki which are branches of the Ganges, or at least communicate with it, greatly facilitate commercial operations. If Chattigan is farther from Patna, Cossimbazar, and some other markets, than the European colonies on the river Hugly, it is nearer Joggia, Dacca, and all the manufactures of the lower river. It is a matter of no consequence whether ships of burden can or cannot enter the Ganges on that side, as the inland navigation is never carried on but with boats.

Though the knowledge they had of these advantages had determined the English to seize upon Chattigan, we are apt to think they would have given it up at the last peace, to get rid of the French, and remove them from a place which lies too near them, and which long habit has endeared to them. We even apprehend that at Chattigan, they would have desisted from those irksome conditions they required at Chandernagore, a place, altogether exposed, which imprint a reproach upon the possessors, more detrimental than it is possible for mere speculators in commerce to conceive. Trade is a free profession. The sea, the voyages, the risque, and the vicissitudes of fortune, all inspire a love of independence. This is the very soul and life of trade, which, when shackled, droops and dies.

The present opportunity is perhaps a favourable one to think of the exchange we propose. The fortifications which the English had begun to erect at Chattigan having been thrown down by repeated earthquakes, seems to have given them a dislike to that place, for which they had always shewn a particular attachment. As to the French, this inconvenience, great as it is, would be preferable to that of living in a defenceless town. It is better to strive against nature than against men, and to be exposed to the shocks of the earth than to the insults of nations. Fortunately for the French, though they are restrained at Bengal, they meet with some amends,

in

in enjoying a better situation on the coast of Coromandel.

To the north of that very extensive coast, they possess Yanam, in the province of Rajahmandry. This factory, which has no land belonging to it, and is situated nine miles from the mouth of the river Ingerom, was formerly a very flourishing one. From mistaken motives, it was neglected about the year 1748. It would, however, afford goods to the value of 4 or 500,000 livres * as the cotton manufactures are very considerable in that neighbourhood, and the cottons remarkably fine and good. It has been found, by experience, to be a good market for disposing of European cloth. The trade of this place would be more lucrative, if they were not obliged to share the profit with the English, who have a small settlement within two miles of the French.

That competition is much more detrimental to their interest at Masulipatam. The French, who formerly were masters of the whole town, but having nothing left now except the lodge they had before 1749, cannot pretend to vie with the English, who make them pay duty for all their imports and exports, and enjoy besides, all the favour in their own trade which sovereignty can command. This being the case, the French confine their dealings to the purchase of some fine handkerchiefs, and other callicoos, to the value of 150,000 livres †. It is far otherwise at Karical.

That town, situated in the kingdom of Tanjour, on one of the branches of the Coleroon, which will bear ships of 150 tons burden, was ceded to the Company in 1738, by a dethroned king, who was in want of protection. Having been restored before he had fulfilled his engagements, he retracted the gift he had made. A Nabob attacked the place with his army, and, in 1739, gave it up to the French, who were in friendship with him. Soon after this, the ungrateful and perfidious prince was strangled by the intrigues of his uncles; and

Present situation of the French upon the coast of Coromandel.

* About 19,700 l. on an average. † 6,562 l. 10 s.

his successor, who had inherited his enemies with his throne, being desirous of obtaining the friendship of a powerful nation, confirmed them in their possession. The English took the place in 1760, and blew up the fortifications. It was afterwards restored to the French who returned thither in 1765.

In its present state, Karical is an open place, which may contain 15,000 inhabitants, most of them employed in weaving ordinary handkerchiefs, and cottons for the wear of the natives. The territory belonging to it, which has been considerably increased by the concessions which the King of Tanjour made in 1749, is now once more what it was at first, two leagues in length, and one league in the broadest part. It is covered with fifteen villages, of which only one deserves our notice; it is called Tirumale-Rayenpatnam, and contains no less than 25,000 souls. They weave and paint tolerably fine Persians, fit for Batavia and the Philippine islands. The Coolies, who are Mohammedans, have small vessels, with which they trade to Ceylon, and along the coast.

France may draw annually from this settlement, two hundred bales of cottons or handkerchiefs fit for Europe, and a large quantity of rice for the subsistence of her other colonies.

All goods bought at Karical, Yanam, and Masulipatam, are carried to Pondicherry, the chief of all the French settlements in India.

This town, which rose from such small beginnings, in time became a great, powerful, and famous city. The streets, which are all straight, and most of them broad, were lined with two rows of trees, which kept them cool, even in the heat of the day. The most remarkable public edifices are a mosque, two Pagodas, two churches, and the governor's house, which is reckoned to be the most magnificent building in the east. They had erected a small citadel in the year 1704; but it is of no use, since they have been allowed to build houses all round it. To supply the loss of this defence, three sides of the town had been fortified with a rampart, a ditch, bastions, and a glacis which was unfinished in some places. The road was defended by batteries judiciously placed.

The town which was a full league in circumference, contained 70,000 inhabitants, of which 4000 were Europeans, Mestees, or Topasses. There were at most 10,000 Mohammedans; the rest were Indians, 15,000 of which were Christians, and the others of seventeen or eighteen different castes or tribes. Three villages, dependent on the town, might contain 10,000 souls.

Such was the state of the colony, when the English made themselves masters of it in the beginning of the year 1761, utterly destroyed it, and turned out the inhabitants. Others may, perhaps, examine whether the barbarous right of war could justify such enormities. Let us turn away our eyes from so many cruelties, committed by a free, generous, and enlightened nation, and only dwell upon the resolution France has taken to restore Pondicherry to its former splendor. Every thing concurs to justify the wisdom of this choice.

This town, like all others on the coast of Coromandel, has no harbour; but it has a commodious road. The ships can anchor close to the shore, under the cannon of the fortifications. Its territory, which is three leagues long and one league broad, is nothing but barren land by the sea-side; but the greatest part of it is fit for the culture of rice, vegetables, and a root called *chaya*, which is used for dying. Two small rivers that cross the country, but are not navigable, afford excellent water for the same purpose, particularly for the blue dye. Three miles to the north-east of the town is a hill, which rises a hundred fathom above the level of the sea, and is a guide to ships at the distance of seven or eight leagues, which is an ineccitable advantage upon so flat a coast. At the top of this hill is a very large pool of water, that has been collecting for ages, and after refreshing and fertilizing a spacious territory, flows down to water the grounds about Pondicherry. Lastly, the colony is favourably situated for the reception of provisions and merchandises from the Carnatic, the kingdoms of Mysore, and Tanjour.

Such were the important reasons which determined France to rebuild Pondicherry. As soon as her agents appeared, on the 11th of April 1765, the unfortunate Indians, who had been dispersed by the calamities of war,

war, flocked thither in great numbers. By the beginning of the year 1770, there were 27,000 who had rebuilt their ruined houses. They are all brought up in the notion that no man can be happy who does not die in the very place where he first saw the light. This prejudice, so pleasing to them, and which may be turned to good account, will no doubt bring them all home again, as soon as there is room for them, and the town is inclosed. The weavers, the dyers, the painters, the merchants, those who have some property to preserve, only wait for this security to follow their inclination.

In their present state, the French factories in India are very expensive, and the returns from them inconsiderable. Unfortunately, this is not compensated by the islands of France and Bourbon, which have not attained to that degree of prosperity we had reason to expect.

Present situation of the French in the isle of France.

might be put to.

The latter of these islands was much extolled; but more speculation than industry was bestowed upon it, and the owners lost their time in conjectures concerning the use it

Some were inclined to make a staple of it, where all India goods should center. They were to be brought thither on Indian bottoms, and then shipped on board the French vessels, which were never to go any farther. They found a double advantage in this scheme; first, in the lessening of expences, as both the pay and the maintenance of Indian sailors is very trifling; and secondly, in the preservation of the ships crews, which are often destroyed by too long a voyage, and still more frequently by the climate, especially at Bengal and in Arabia. This system, which ought, perhaps, to have been adopted, was considered as impracticable, on account of the supposed necessity of exhibiting a formidable flag on the seas of Asia, to prevent or check the insults that are often committed in those parts.

Others were of opinion, that the inhabitants of the Isle of France should be allowed to trade to India, which they had never yet been suffered to do. The supporters of this system maintained, that the proposed freedom would

would prove an abundant source of wealth to the colony, and consequently to the mother-country. They might be in the right, but the trials that have been made have not been successful; and, without examining whether this innovation had, or had not, been judiciously conducted, it was decided that the island should be entirely confined to agriculture.

This new regulation occasioned fresh mistakes. Men were sent from Europe to the colony, who neither understood husbandry, nor were accustomed to labour. The lands were distributed at a venture, and without distinguishing what was to be cleared from what did not want it. Money was advanced to the planters, not in proportion to their industry, but to the interest they could make with administration. The Company, who gained *cent. per cent.* upon the commodities the colony drew from Europe, and fifty *per cent.* upon those that were sent in from India, required that the produce of the country should be delivered into their warehouses at a very low price. The oppression of monopoly was aggravated by the tyranny of endless and needless services. To complete the misfortunes of the colony, the Company, who had kept all the power in their own hands, broke the engagements they had entered into with their subjects, or rather with their slaves.

Under such a government, no improvements could be expected. Nothing was carried on with steadiness. Cotton, indigo, sugar, arnotto, pepper, tea, cocoa; every thing was tried, but so carelessly, that no advantage was procured from them. The essential cultures were neglected in pursuing chimerical projects. Though, in the year 1765, there were in the colony 1469 white people, besides the troops; 587 Indians or free negroes; 11,881 slaves; their productions did not amount to more than 320,650 pounds weight of wheat, 47,430 pounds of rice, 1,570,040 pounds of maize, 142,700 pounds of kidney-beans, 135,500 pounds of oats. Those who had an opportunity of seeing and observing the agriculture of the Isle of France, found it little better than what they had seen amongst the savages.

Some good alterations have been made in the colony since it fell into the hands of government. The culture of

of coffee has been introduced there, as it had long been at Bourbon. It thrives so well, that they do not despair of gathering six or seven millions weight one day, provided a wise administration will supply them with the means of improving this culture; for without such helps, no colony can possibly prosper. To these hopes another has lately been joined.

It is well known, that, for these two hundred years, the Dutch have been enriching themselves by the sale of cloves and nutmeg. To secure to themselves the exclusive trade of this article, they have put in irons or utterly destroyed the nation that was in possession of those spices; and, lest the price of them should fall even in their own hands, they have rooted up most of the trees, and frequently burnt the fruit of those they have preserved. This abominable avidity, which has so often been mentioned with indignation by other nations, so exasperated Mr Poivre, who had travelled all over Asia as a naturalist and a philosopher, that he availed himself of the authority he was intrusted with in the Isle of France, and sent men into the least frequented parts of the Moluccas, to search for what avarice had hitherto withheld from the rest of the world. The labours of those intrepid and sagacious navigators, in whom he confided, were crowned with success.

On the 24th of June 1770, they brought to the Isle of France 400 nutmeg-trees; 10,000 nutmegs, either growing or ready to grow; 70 clove trees, and a chest of cloves, some of which were growing, and already come up.

This rich prize was distributed among the colonists, to try all the different soils, and every aspect. Most of the young trees died, and the others are not likely to bear any fruit. But, whatever may happen, the Isle of France must always be allowed to be the best gift of nature, for any nation desirous of trading to Asia.

It is situated in the African seas, but just at the entrance of the Indian ocean. As it lies a little out of the common tract, its armaments can be carried on with the more secrecy. They who wish it was nearer our continent, do not consider, that, if it were, it would be impossible to reach the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel in

in a month's time, and the most distant gulphs in two months at most, which is an inestimable advantage to a nation that has no sea-port in India. This island, tho' in the same latitude with the barren and scorching coasts of Africa, is temperate and healthful. The soil, though stony, is tolerably fertile. Experience has shewn that it will produce most of the necessaries, and even of the luxuries of life. Whatever may be wanting, they may get from Madagascar, which abounds with provisions, and from Bourbon, where the inhabitants have retained their simplicity of manners, and a taste for husbandry. What iron they may have occasion for, and cannot get from those two islands, they dig out of their own mines.

GREAT BRITAIN sees, with a jealous eye, her rivals possessed of a settlement which may prove the ruin of her flourishing trade with Asia. At the very first breaking out of a war, her utmost efforts will certainly be aimed at a colony that threatens the source of her richest treasures. What a stroke for France, should she suffer herself to be stripped of it.

Yet this is by no means improbable, if we consider that hitherto there has been no settled plan for fortifying this island; that the means have always been wanting or misapplied; that, from year to year, the ministry of Lewis XV. have waited for the dispatches of the administrators to come to a determination, just as one would wait for a return of a courier from the frontiers. Far from supposing that the besiegers would meet with an insurmountable resistance, it is to be feared they would carry their point by the force they have in India, without any succours from Europe.

It is now time to speak freely. Whoever goes round the coasts of the Isle of France must be astonished to see it every where accessible to boats. Though it is surrounded with reefs, there are many bays where troops may be landed under the protection of the ship-guns.

In those parts of the island where ships must keep further off, the sea is so calm and smooth, between the reef and

*It behoves the
Court of Ver-
sailles to fort-
ify the Isle of
France and Pon-
dicherry, if it
will have any
share in the
trade of India.*

and the land, that boats may row in the night without the least danger.

If in some places between the reef and the land the water is too shallow for the boats to come on shore, then the men can land with the water half way up their legs. The sea is so calm within the reef, that this may be done with the utmost safety. They are more secure of a retreat, in case of resistance, and the boats are the safer whilst the operation is going forward.

This is without exception the notion we are to form of the Isle of France; for, if we sometimes meet with a point where a boat cannot land, we are sure of finding an opening at twenty fathoms to the right or left: so that the enemy will never land sword in hand, but from ignorance or presumption. As it is impossible to guard a coast that measures forty leagues, there will always be some defenceless place fit for landing.

During the last war, they had erected batteries all round the island, which pointed directly to the sea, and could only play upon ships anchored at a distance, or under sail. Some abler engineers have found out that these batteries, erected at a great expence, only divided the forces, answered no purpose, would be as defenceless as they were useless, and could not stand the fire of ships, when the best fortifications are not proof against it. They are now forsaken, and nothing has been substituted in their stead.

The north-west harbour is the chief place of the island, and must be the enemy's principal object in his plan for an attack. The nature of the ground will not admit of fortifying it so as to stand a siege. It should be secured from a surprise, and then an intermediate spot should be fortified in the heart of the island, from whence, by means of communications properly disposed, the forces of the colony may be quickly dispatched wherever they might be wanted.

With such an establishment for the last resource, the enemy must fight a hundred battles before he can conquer the island. He will not even compels it, if the roads leading from the center to the circumference, which must be cut through the woods, are so artfully contrived as to facilitate the motions of the troops towards the circumference,

circumference, and at the same time to obstruct those of the enemy towards the centre. The nature of the country will admit of this: It is full of gullies which must be crossed, and of mountains which require many windings. It is an easy matter to seize the favourable spots.

However, there is so necessary and absolute a connection between the Isle of France and Pondicherry, that those two possessions are altogether dependent on each other; for, without the Isle of France, there would be no protection for the settlements in India; and without Pondicherry, the Isle of France would be exposed to the invasion of the English from Asia as well as from Europe.

The Isle of France and Pondicherry, considered in their necessary connection, will be a security to each other. Pondicherry will protect the Isle of France, as being the rival of Madras, which the English must always cover with their land and sea forces; and on the other hand, the Isle of France will always be ready to succour Pondicherry, or to act offensively, as circumstances shall require.

From these principles it appears how necessary it is to put Pondicherry immediately in a state of defence. Ever since the year 1764, private interests, that clash with the interest of the nation, have made it a matter of doubt which was the best plan of fortification for this important place. Considerable sums have already been expended on this account, and all to no purpose, because they have been successively laid out upon contrary systems. It would be needless to dwell upon the mischiefs attending these eternal uncertainties.

WHEN the Isle of France and Pondicherry are once put in a proper posture of defence, we may then think seriously of trade, which ceased to exist the moment it became free. Indeed the expeditions to China have continued; those to the islands of France and Bourbon have even increased: but, except an armament or two, which were

The French being once firmly established in India, will shake off the oppression which the English impose upon them.

owing to particular circumstances, no sensible merchant has sent his property to Malabar, Coromandel, or Bengal; and the few who have ventured to do it, have been ruined. It could not be otherwise; and yet no inference can be drawn from thence in favour of exclusive privileges.

It may be remembered, that the destruction of the Company, which would have happened of itself, was hastened by avarice and animosity. Politics, which were not concerned in the revolution, had made no provision for the regulation of that public trade which was to supply the place of the exclusive privilege. That sudden transition could be attended with no success. Before this new system was entered upon, private merchants ought, insensibly and gradually, to have been substituted to the Company. They should have been put in the way of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the several branches of a commerce with which they were totally unacquainted. They should have been allowed time to form connections in the factories. They should have been favoured and assisted in their first expeditions.

But all these precautions would have been insufficient to insure the success of the French traders in India. It was morally impossible they should cope with the English, who, being masters of every thing and every place, had all the advantages resulting from power, and from the loose principles which prosperity inspires; which gave them fair opportunities of defeating all attempts of this kind. So that whichever way, or in whatever shape, the trade of France was carried on, it must of course suffer considerably. No doubt things would succeed better, if the court of Versailles were to put the settlements in India in a condition to grant that protection which every sovereign owes to his subjects throughout his dominions. It would be better still if the British ministry would watch over the execution of treaties with that steadiness that justice requires. But this oppression, alike disgraceful to the nation that suffers from it, and to the nation that allows it, can never be effectually removed, but by restoring the balance between them; and unfortunately this can only be done by a war.

Far be it from us to suggest any idea that would tend to

to rekindle the flames of discord. Rather let the voice of reason and philosophy be heard by the rulers of the world. May all sovereigns, after so many ages of error, learn to prefer the virtuous glory of making a few men happy, to the mad ambition of reigning over wasted regions, and over people groaning under the weight of oppression. May all men become brethren, and accustom themselves to consider the universe as one family, under the eye of one common Father. But these wishes, which are those of every sensible and humane man, will appear as idle dreams to ambitious ministers, who hold the reins of empire. Their busy and restless disposition will continue to shed torrents of blood.

Some pitiful commercial interest will again arm the French and the English. Tho' Great Britain, in most of her wars, has aimed chiefly at destroying the industry of her neighbours, and though the superiority of her naval forces may feed this hope, so often deceived, we may safely foretel, that she would chuse to remove the scene of action from the seas of Asia, where she would have so little to gain, and so much to lose. That power is not ignorant of the secret wishes formed on all sides for the overthrow of an edifice which obstructs all the rest. The Subah of Bengal secretly murmurs at his not having so much as an appearance of authority. The Subah of the Decan is inconsolable to see his commerce under the controul of a foreign power. The Nabob of Arcot endeavours to dispel the jealousies of his tyrants. The Marrattas are exasperated to find nothing but obstacles to their depredations. All the powers in those parts are either actually enslaved, or think themselves at the eve of being so. England, we may presume, would not wish to see the French at the head of such a confederacy. A strict neutrality for the Indies would suit them best; and we may be sure this is the scheme they would gladly follow.

But would this system be as eligible for their rivals? Certainly not. The French are informed, that warlike preparations made at the Isle of France might be of great service; that the conquests of the English are too extensive not to lie exposed; and that, since their experienced officers are returned home, the British posse-

sions in Indostan are only guarded by young people, who are more intent upon making their fortunes than upon military exercises. It is, therefore, to be presumed, that a warlike nation would eagerly seize an opportunity of repairing their former disasters. At the sight of their standards, all these oppressed sovereigns would take the field; and the rulers of India, surrounded with enemies, and attacked at once on the north and on the south, by sea and by land, would infallibly be overpowered.

Then the French, considered as the deliverers of Indostan, would emerge from that state of humiliation into which their own misconduct hath plunged them. They would become the idols of the princes and people of Asia, provided the revolution they had brought about was to them a lesson of moderation. Their trade will be extensive and flourishing, so long as they continue to be just. But this prosperity would end in some fatal catastrophe, should an inordinate ambition prompt them to plunder, ravage, and oppress. To give stability to their situation, they must, even by noble and generous proceedings, force their rivals to forgive them their advantages. No great magnanimity will be requisite, patiently to endure the operations of the northern nations of Europe in the seas of Asia.

THE END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

B O O K . V.

Trade of Denmark, Øfend, Sweden, Prussia, Spain, and Russia, to the East Indies. Important inquiries concerning the connections of Europe with the Indies.

IT is an opinion pretty generally received, that the Cimbrian Chersonese, situated towards the extremity of Germany, and known at present under the name of Holstein, Sleswick, and Jutland, was, in the earliest times, possessed by the Cimbri ; and that the Teutones inhabited the neighbouring islands. Whether these two tribes had the same origin is uncertain ; but it appears that they quitted their forests or their marshes, in an united body, and, as one nation, went in quest of plunder, of renown, and a milder climate in Gaul. They were even preparing to pass the Alps, when Rome thought it now time to stem a torrent which was carrying every thing before it. Those barbarians triumphed over all the generals whom that haughty republic sent to oppose them, till the memorable period when they were cut off by Marius.

Their country, which that dreadful catastrophe had almost entirely desolated, was repeopled by the Scythians, who, being dispossessed by Pompey of that immense tract of country lying between the Euxine and Caspian Seas, marched towards the north and west of Europe, subduing the nations they found in their way. They obliged Russia, Saxony, Westphalia, the Cimbrian Chersonese, and the whole country as far as Finland, Norway, and Sweden, to submit to their power. It is pretended that Wodin, their leader, over-ran so many countries, and wanted to subdue them, with no other view than to excite a general indignation against the formidable, arduous, and tyrannical power of the Romans. That grudge which he left in the north, after his death, secretly increased to such a height in those parts, that after several centuries, all the nations, with one consent, rushed upon that empire, so hostile to every sort of li-

berty, and enjoyed the consolation of subverting it, after having enfeebled it by several repeated shocks.

After those renowned exploits, Denmark and Norway became destitute of inhabitants. They recovered gradually and quietly, and began again to grow conspicuous about the commencement of the eighth century. The earth no longer served as a theatre whereon to display their valour: their career extended to the ocean. Encompassed by two seas, they devoted themselves wholly to piracy, a sort of school where uncivilized people first acquire skill in navigation.

They first of all tried their force upon the adjacent states, and seized the small number of merchant ships which traversed the Baltic. Their restless spirit, emboldened by these successes, enabled them to form more important schemes. The seas and coasts of Scotland, Ireland, England, Flanders, France, and even of Spain, Italy, and Greece, were infested by their depredations. They frequently penetrated into the interior parts of those immense countries, and they aspired at the conquest of Normandy and England. Notwithstanding the confusion which prevails in the accounts of those barbarous times, still some of the causes of so many extraordinary events may be unfolded.

Originally, the Danes and Norwegians possessed that violent inclination for piracy which has always been observed to be incident to a people situated near the sea, whenever they are free from the restraint of good manners and good laws. Custom necessarily made the sea familiar to them, and inured them to its rage. Without agriculture, breeding but few cattle, and finding but a scanty resource from hunting in a country covered with ice and snow, they could have no great attachment to their own territories. The ease with which they equipped fleets, which were nothing else than rafts, clumsily put together for sailing along the coasts, afforded them an easy access to all parts, and enabled them to make descents, to plunder, and to re-embark. The trade of piracy was to them what it had been to the first heroes of Greece, the road to glory and fortune, an honourable profession, which consisted in a contempt of every danger. This idea inspired them with invincible courage,

courage in their expeditions; and they were sometimes under the joint command of different chiefs, and sometimes divided into as many armies as nations. These sudden irruptions, made in a variety of places at once, left to the inhabitants of the coasts, who were but ill-defended, because ill governed, only the sad alternative, either of being massacred, or of giving up their all to ransom their lives.

Though this destructive character was a natural consequence of the savage life led by the Danes and Norwegians, and of the rough and military education they received, it was more particularly occasioned by the religion of Woden. That victorious impostor, exalted, if one may speak so, by his sanguinary precepts, the natural fierceness of those nations. He deified all the implements of war, as swords, axes, and lances. The most sacred engagements were confirmed by these precious instruments. A lance set up in the middle of a plain was the signal for prayer and sacrifice. Woden himself, at his death, was ranked amongst the immortal gods, and was the first deity of those horrid regions, where rocks and woods were stained and consecrated with human blood. His followers thought they honoured him, by calling him the god of armies, the father of slaughter, the plunderer, the incendiary. The warriors, when they went to battle, made a vow to send him a certain number of souls consecrated to him. These souls were the property of Woden. It was the general belief, that this god appeared in every battle, sometimes to protect those who fought valiantly, and sometimes to strike the happy victims which he destined to death: These followed him to the heavenly retreat, which was open to none but warriors. To obtain this reward, people ran to death, and to martyrdom. This belief increased their natural propensity to war, till it rose to enthusiasm, and to a holy thirst for blood.

Christianity reversed all the ideas which formed the constituent parts of such a system as this. The Christian missionaries endeavoured to bring their proselytes to a sedentary life, that they might be fit to receive their instructions. They disgusted them at their roving life, by suggesting other means of subsistence. They were to happy.

happy as to inspire them with a love of agriculture, and of fishing. The great plenty of herrings which then flocked to their coasts, afforded them an easy means of procuring food. The overplus of this fish they soon learnt to barter for salt to cure the rest. These growing connections were encouraged by one common faith, new prospects, mutual wants, and great safety. This revolution was so complete, that, since the conversion of the Danes and Norwegians, not a single instance is to be found in history, of their expeditions or depredations.

The new spirit which seemed to animate Norway and Denmark, could not fail of extending their communication with the other nations of Europe. Unfortunately it was intercepted, by an ascendant gained by the Hanse towns. Even when that great and singular confederacy decayed, Hamburg still maintained the superiority it had acquired over all the subjects of the Danish dominions. They were beginning to break the bands that had subjected them to this kind of monopoly, when they were induced to undertake the navigation to the East Indies, by an incident that merits particularly to be remarked.

Denmark undertakes the trade of the Indies.

A Dutch factor, named Boschower, being sent to conclude a treaty of commerce with the king of Ceylon, so ingratiated himself with that monarch, that he became chief of his council, his admiral, and received the title of prince of Mingone. Boschower, intoxicated with these honours, hattered to Europe to make parade of them to his countrymen. The indifference with which those republicans received the titled slave of an Asiatic court, offended him highly; and he was so much provoked at it, that he went over to Christiern IV. king of Denmark, and offered him his services, and the interest he had at Ceylon. His proposals were accepted. He sailed in 1618, with six ships, three of which belonged to the government, and three to the Company that had associated to undertake the trade of the Indies. His death, which happened in the passage, blasted the hopes they had conceived. The Danes met with a bad reception at Ceylon, and their chief, Ovè Giedde de Tommerup,

Tommerup, saw no other resource than to carry them to Tanjour, the nearest part on the continent.

Tanjour is a small state, extending to an hundred miles where it is longest, and eighty where it is broadest. It is, of all that coast, the province that raises the greatest quantity of rice. By means of this natural wealth, of a great many manufactures, and plenty of roots used for dying, the public revenue amounts to near five millions*. It owes its prosperous condition to its being watered by the Caveri, a river which comes down from the mountains of Gate. Upwards of 400 miles from its source, it divides into two streams at the entrance of Tanjour. The eastern branch takes the name of Coleroon. The other retains the name of Caveri, and subdivides again into four branches, which all flow within the kingdom, and preserve it from that horrible drought which scorches the rest of Coromandel, for the greatest part of the year.

This happy situation made the Danes wish to settle a colony in Tanjour. Their proposals met with a favourable reception. They obtained a fruitful and populous territory, on which they built Tranquebar, and afterwards the fortress of Dannebourg, sufficient for the defence both of the road and the town. On their part they engaged to pay an annual rent of 16,500 livres †, which is paid to this day.

This circumstance was favourable for opening an extensive trade. The Portuguese, who groaned under the oppression of a foreign yoke, made but a faint struggle to preserve their possessions. The Spaniards sent no ships but to the Molucca and Philippine islands. The Dutch thought of nothing but engrossing the spice-trade. The English felt the effects of the disturbances of their own country, even in the Indies. All these powers beheld a new rival with regret; but none of them formed any opposition to it.

Hence it happened, that the Danes, notwithstanding the scantiness of their capital, which was no more than 853,263 livres †, carried on a pretty considerable trade in all parts of the Indies. Unhappily the Dutch Company acquired such a superiority, as to exclude them from

* 218,750 l. † 721 l. 17s. 6d. † 37,330 l. 5s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

from the markets where they had dealt to the best advantage ; and, what was still more unfortunate, the dispositions that rent the north of Europe would not permit the mother-country to attend to such remote concerns. The Danes of Tranquebar insensibly fell into contempt, both with the natives, who value men only in proportion to their riches, and with rival nations, with whom they were unable to support a competition. They were discouraged by this inferiority ; and the Company gave up their privilege, and made over their settlements to the government, as an indemnification for the sums they had advanced.

Changes suffered by the Danish trade in India. A NEW society was formed in 1670, upon the ruins of the old one. Christiern V.

made them a present, in ships and other effects, valued at 310,828 livres, 10 sous *, and the adventurers advanced 732,600 li-

vres ‡. This second undertaking, which was projected without a sufficient fund, proved still more unfortunate than the first. After a few voyages, the factory of Tranquebar was left to shift for itself. All they had to subsist the inhabitants, and their small garrison, was their little territory, and two vessels that they freighted for the merchants of that country. Even these resources sometimes failed them ; and, to save themselves from starving, they were reduced to mortgage three of the four bastions of which their fortress was constructed. They were hardly in a condition to equip a vessel for Europe, with a very moderate cargo, once in three years.

Compassion seemed to be the only sentiment that so desperate a situation could inspire. Yet jealousy, which never sleeps, and avarice, which is alarmed at every trifle, stirred up an odious war against the Danes. The Raja of Tanjour, who had several times cut off their communication with his territory, attacked them in 1689, in Tranquebar itself, at the instigation of the Dutch. That prince was on the point of taking the place, after a six months siege, when the English came to its relief, and

* 13,598 l. 14 s. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

† 32,051 l. 5 s.

and saved it. This event neither was, nor could be attended with any important consequences. The Danish Company continued to languish. It drooped gradually every day, and at last expired in 1730.

From its ashes, two years after, another sprung up, which still subsists. The favours that were heaped up on this Company, to enable them to trade with economy and freedom, plainly shew of what importance this commerce appeared to the government. Their exclusive right is to last for forty years. Whatever belongs to the armament and equipping of their ships, is exempted from all duties. The workmen they employ, whether natives or foreigners, are not tied down to the regulations of a trading company, which are a restraint upon industry in Denmark, as well as in other countries in Europe. They are exempted from using stamp paper in their transactions. They have an absolute jurisdiction over the persons they employ; and the sentences passed by the directors are not subject to review, unless the punishment inflicted be capital. To remove even the shadow of constraint, the sovereign has renounced the right he ought to have, as chiefly concerned, of interfering in the administration. He has no influence in the choice of officers whither civil or military, and has only reserved a power of confirming the office of Governor of Tranquebar. He has even bound himself to ratify all political conventions they might think proper to make with the Asiatic powers.

In return for so many indulgences, government has only required one *per cent.* upon all Indian and Chinese goods which may be exported, and two and an half *per cent.* upon all intended for home consumpt.

The grant, containing the above conditions, was no sooner made out, than adventurers eagerly were sought for. To engage them the more easily, the stock was distinguished into two sorts. The one was called *fixed*, and was appropriated to the acquisition of all the effects which the old Company had in Europe and Asia. They called the other *variable*, because every year it is regulated by the number, the cargo, and the expence of the ships they think proper to send out. Every proprietor may chuse whether he will or will not be concerned in these adventures, which are liquidated at the close of every

every voyage. If any one should decline being concerned, which has never yet been the case, the venture would be offered to another. By this arrangement, the Company became permanent by the *fixed*, and annual by the *variable* stock.

It seemed difficult to state the share of expence that each of these funds was to bear. Every thing was settled with more ease than was expected. It was agreed, that the *variable* should pay nothing but the necessary expences for the purchase, the fitting out, and the cargoes of the ships. All beside was the business of the *fixed* stock, which, by way of indemnification, was to take up ten *per cent.* upon all Asiatic goods which should be sold in Europe, and five *per cent.* upon all that should be sent out from Tranquebar. This continual addition to the *fixed* stock has so increased the capital, that, instead of four hundred shares, at 1125 livres*, which was the original stock of the Company, it now consists of fifteen hundred shares, at 1687 l. 10 s. †. It was settled at this number in 1755; and, ever since, the duties which went to the increase of the *fixed* stock, have been applied to the increasing of the dividend, which till then had been taken upon the profits of the *variable* stock.

To be possessed of one share is sufficient for conferring the right of voting at the general meetings. A proprietor of three shares has two votes; a proprietor of five has three votes; and so on in the same proportion to twenty shares, which entitles the owner to twelve votes, which is the farthest any one can go.

Some alteration was made in these regulations in 1772, when the grant was renewed for twenty years. It was stipulated, that no member of the Company should, at any time, have more than three votes, and that none should be allowed to give his vote in writing, or by proxy.

*State of the
Danish
trade in the
Indies.*

DENMARK trades to the same parts of Asia as other European nations. The pepper they bring from Malabar does not exceed fifty thousand weight a-year, upon an average.

* 49 l. 4s. 4½ d.

† 73 l. 16s. 1½ d.

One

One would be apt to think, from every circumstance, that their trade must be brisk on the coast of Coromandel. They possess in that country an excellent territory. Though but two leagues in circumference, the number of people amounts to thirty thousand. About ten thousand live in the town of Tranquebar. There are twelve thousand in a large village, abounding in coarse manufactures. The rest are usefully employed in some less considerable villages. Three hundred Danes, fifty of whom compose the garrison, are the only Europeans in the colony. Their annual maintenance costs but 96,000 livres *, which is nearly the income of the settlement.

The Company employ but a small number of factors on the spot. They only send them two ships once in three years; and those ships carry in all but 1800 bales of ordinary linen cloth, which do not cost above 1,500,000 livres †. The factors know not how to improve their leisure to the advancement of their own private fortune. They can think of no other way, than lending the small capital they have at their disposal, to India merchants at a high interest. And indeed, Tranquebar, though an ancient settlement, has not that appearance of life and opulence observable in more modern colonies, which have been managed with spirit and skill. The French, driven out of their own settlements, had somewhat enlivened Tranquebar; but, when they left it, the colony fell back into its former languid state. Yet the situation of the Danes in Coromandel is not so bad as at Bengal.

Soon after their arrival in Asia, they displayed their flag on the Ganges. But their ill success obliged them suddenly to quit it; and they never appeared there again till 1755. Commercial jealousy, which is become the ruling passion of our age, has frustrated their views upon Bankibasar, and they have been reduced to the necessity of settling in the neighbourhood of that place. The French, who alone had supported the new factory, found a refuge there during the calamities of the last war, and all the assistance of friendship and gratitude. Few ships visit that place directly from Europe. Since 1757,

* 4200 l.

† 65,625 l.

there have been but two; both their cargoes together cost but 2,160,000 livres * at home.

The trade to China being less tedious, and less embarrassed, the Danish Company have cultivated it with greater ardour than either that to the Ganges or to Corromandel, which require a previous stock. They send to that place a large ship every year, and often two. The teas, which are their chief return, were mostly consumed in England. The acquisition that kingdom has made of the Isle of Man, which was the mart for that contraband trade, by depriving the Danes of that method of getting off their goods, must necessarily lessen their dealings with China †.

At present, the annual sales of the Company amount to 6,500,000 livres ‡. It is not likely they should be carried much higher. The equipment of their vessels, it is well known, costs but a trifling expence. Their sailors, though not so bold as those of some other nations, have prudence and experience. The iron they send to the Indies is found in the mines of Norway. Government pays them a very good price for the saltpetre they oblige them to bring home. The national manufactures are neither so numerous nor so much favoured as to be any hindrance to their sales. They can easily dispose of their goods all over the north, and in some parts of Germany. They have good laws, and their whole conduct deserves the highest encomiums. There is not, perhaps, any administration comparable to that of this society for honesty and œconomy.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the Danish Company

* 94,500 l

† Whatever may be in this conjecture, it is evident that the Company, during the fourteen years immediately following their grant, had fitted out thirty-one ships. Their cargo in cash amounted to 3,714,135 Danish crowns, and in goods to the value of 258,938 crowns. In the same space of time twenty-four ships arrived, whose cargoes were sold for 7,000,461 crowns. There was so little consumption of them in the mother-country, that the exportation arose to 6,166,432 crowns. In this respect, there is no India Company has been of so much service to their country, as none of them has sold so much for foreign markets.

‡ 284,375 l.

pany will always languish. The consumption of their commodities will necessarily be moderate, in a region which nature has doomed to poverty, and which industry cannot enrich. The mother-country is neither populous, nor powerful enough to afford them the means of extending their commerce. Their funds are scanty, and will always remain so. Foreigners will not trust their money in the hands of a body which is under the control of an absolute monarchy. With management that would do honour to the best constituted republic, they must suffer all the hardships of slavery. A despotic government, with the best intentions in the world, can never do good. It begins by taking from the subjects that free exercise of their will which is the very soul and spring of nations ; and when it has broken this spring, it never can restore it. It is mutual confidence that binds men together, unites their interests, and makes business go on. But arbitrary power effectually excludes all confidence, because it effectually excludes all safety.

The project, formed in 1728, of removing the seat of the Company from Copenhagen to Altena, could not remedy these inconveniences. The ships, in this case, would have been more easily sent off; and would not have been exposed to the danger of missing their voyage, by being frost-bound, as they sometimes are, in the Sound. But we cannot agree with the authors of the scheme, that the vicinity would have induced the Hamburgers to place their capitals on an adventure to which they have always shown a dislike. We may, therefore, boldly affirm, that England and Holland were guilty of a needless act of tyranny, when they opposed this domestic plan of a free and independent power. Their uneasiness about Ostend was better grounded.

THAT knowledge of trade and administration, and that sound philosophy, which insensibly gained ground all over Europe, met with invincible obstacles in some monarchies. They could not penetrate to the court of Vienna, which was wholly intent upon projects of war, and upon aggrandizing itself by conquest. The English and Dutch, whose attention was engaged in

*Establishment
of an India-
Company at
Ostend.*

preventing France from increasing her commerce, her colonies and her navy, stirred up enemies against her on the continent, and lavished immense sums upon the house of Austria, which were employed against France : but, at the peace, the luxury of one crown restored more riches to the other, than it had taken from it by the war.

Dominions, which, by their extent, would render the Austrian power formidable, set bounds to it by means of their situation ; for most of its provinces are distant from the sea. Its lands produce but little wine, and but few sorts of fruit that other nations put any value upon. It affords neither oil, silk, nor fine wool. It had no pretensions to opulence, and knew not how to be frugal. With the usual luxury and pomp of great courts, it gave no encouragement to industry and manufactures, which might have supplied the means of indulging that expensive taste. The contempt in which it has always held the sciences, stopped its progress in every thing. Artists will never be eminent in any country where they are not enlightened by men of learning. Sciences and arts both languish, wherever a freedom of thinking is not allowed. The pride and intolerant spirit of the house of Austria kept her vast domains poor, superstitious, and fond of a barbarous luxury.

Even the low countries, formerly so famous for their activity and industry, retained nothing of their ancient splendour. Not a single ship was to be seen in the harbour of Antwerp ; it was no longer the store house of the north, as it had been for two centuries past. Brussels and Louvain, far from supplying other nations with their clothing, bought their own of the English. That precious article, the herring fishery, had passed from Bruges to Holland. Ghent, Courtray, and some other towns, found their linen and lace manufactures decrease daily. Those provinces, placed between the three most enlightened and most trading nations in Europe, were not able, notwithstanding their natural advantages, to bear up against such a competition. After striving some time against oppression, against impediments multiplied by ignorance, and against the privileges which a rapacious neighbour

neighbour extorted from the continual wants of government, they suffered a deplorable decay.

Prince Eugene, a great statesman and warrior, with a mind superior to every prejudice, had been long in search of the means of enriching a power whose boundaries he had so greatly enlarged. A proposal was made to him, for establishing an India Company at Ostend. The first contrivers of this scheme had very extensive views. They pretended, that, if it could be supported, it would excite industry throughout the Austrian dominions; would give them a navy, one part of which would be in the Netherlands, and the other at Fiume, or at Trieste; would deliver that power from her dependence on the subsidies of England and Holland, and make her formidable to the coasts of Turkey, and to the city of Constantinople itself.

The able minister to whom this was addressed was very sensible of the value of such overtures. But he resolved not to be precipitate. To accustom his own court and all Europe to this novelty, he chose to send out two ships to India in 1717, with none but his own passports. Their voyage was so successful, that more were sent out the following years. Every expedition proved fortunate; and, in 1722, the Court of Vienna thought it was time to secure the property of the adventurers, who were for the most part English and Dutch, by the fullest charter that ever was granted.

The new Company, who had a capital of twenty millions, divided into ten thousand shares, appeared with great lustre in all the markets in India. They made two settlements, that of Coblon, between Madras and Sadraspatnam on the coast of Coromandel, and that of Bantibas on the Ganges. They even intended to procure a place to put in at for refreshments, and had cast their eye upon Madagascar for that purpose. They were so happy in the choice of their agents, that they could rely upon them for the care of their concerns; as they had shewn resolution enough to surmount every obstacle that jealousy had thrown in their way, and skill enough to extricate themselves from all the snares that had been laid for them: The richness of their returns, and the reputation of their stock, which brought in fifteen per cent.

still increased their confidence. It is not to be supposed they would have been disappointed of their expectations, had not their operations been thwarted by political interests. That we may unfold properly the causes of this dispute, it is necessary to take up the matter farther back.

*Causes of the
destruction of
the Company
at Ostend.*

WHEN Isabella had effected the discovery of America, and penetrated as far as the Philippine Islands, Europe was so plunged in ignorance, that it was thought proper to prohibit the navigation to the East and West Indies to all subjects of Spain who were not natives of Castile. That part of the low countries which had not recovered its liberty, having been given, in 1598, to the Infanta Isabella, on her marriage with the Archduke Albert, the new sovereigns were required to make a formal renunciation of this trade. When these provinces were again united to the monarchy in 1638, that circumstance made no alteration in that odious stipulation. The Flemings, justly offended at seeing themselves deprived of the right which nature gives to every people, of trading wherever other nations are not lawfully entitled to an exclusive privilege, complained loudly of this imposition. They were seconded by their governor the Cardinal Infant, who obtained a decision, that they should be authorised to trade to the East Indies. The act for this purpose was not yet issued, when Portugal shook off the yoke under which it had so long been oppressed. The fear of increasing the discontent of the Portuguese, whom they hoped to bring back, prevented the Spaniards from giving them a new rival in Asia, and protracted the conclusion of this important affair. It was not terminated when an agreement was made at Munster in 1648, that the subjects of the king of Spain should never extend their trade in the Indies, farther than it was at that period. This act ought not to have been less binding on the Emperor, than it was on the court of Madrid, since he possesses the low countries on the same terms, and with the same obligations they were subject to, when under the dominion of Spain.

Thus

Thus reasoned Holland and England, in order to procure the suppression of the new Company, whose success gave them great uneasiness. Those two allies, who by their maritime forces could have annihilated Ostend and its trade, did not chuse to quarrel with a power which they themselves had raised, and which they thought they stood in need of against the house of Bourbon. So that, though they were determined not to suffer the house of Austria to go to the fountain-head of their wealth, they contented themselves with making remonstrances on the violation of the most solemn engagements. They were seconded by France, which had the same concern in the affair, and was moreover guarantee of the violated treaty.

The Emperor did not yield to these representations. He was supported in his undertaking, by the obstinacy of his own disposition, by the ambitious prospects that had been suggested to him, and by the great privileges and indulgences granted by Spain to his merchants. That crown was then in hopes of obtaining the heiress of the house of Austria for Don Carlos, and thought no concessions too great for such an alliance. The union of those two courts, which had always been considered as irreconcileable, alarmed all Europe. Every nation thought itself in danger. Numberless leagues were formed, and many treaties concluded, to endeavour to break that harmony, which was thought to be more dangerous than it really was. All was to no purpose, till the council of Madrid, having no more treasures to lavish upon Germany, were convinced that they were pursuing a phantom. Austria was not dismayed at the defection of her ally, and seemed determined to assert her claims, and especially her commercial interests. Whether the maritime powers were intimidated by this steadiness, or whether, as was more probably the case, they only consulted the dictates of sound policy, they determined to guarantee the Pragmatic sanction in 1727. The court of Vienna paid this important service, by sacrificing the Ostend Company.

Though the public acts mention only a suspension for seven years, the proprietors plainly saw, that their ruin was determined, and that this stipulation was only inserted

ferted as a salvo to the Imperial dignity. They had to^o good an opinion of the court of London, and the States General, to suppose they would have guarded effectually against the dismemberment of the Austrian dominions, for a mere momentary advantage. This persuasion determined them to think no more of Ostend, and to dispose of their stock some other way. They tried successively to settle at Hamburg, at Trieste, and in Tuscany ; but all their endeavours were rendered abortive either by nature, by force, or policy. Those succeeded best who made choice of Sweden.

*General
sketch of
the ancient
govern-
ment of
Sweden.*

SWEDEN, whose inhabitants, known by the name of Goths, had contributed to the subversion of the Roman empire, after having made a noise and devastation like a torrent, shrank back into its own deserts, and sunk into its former obscurity. Their domestic contests, as sharp as they were constant, left them no time to think of foreign wars, or to unite their interests with those of other nations. They had unfortunately the worst of all constitutions, in which authority is so divided, that neither of the several powers knows exactly what degree falls to its share. The jarring pretensions of the king, the clergy, the nobility, the cities, and the peasants, made such a confusion as would a thousand times have proved the ruin of the kingdom, if the same state of barbarity had not enfeebled the neighbouring people. Gustavus Vasa put an end to that anarchy, by uniting the greater part of those powers in his own person ; but he plunged the state into another calamity, fully as fatal as the former.

That nation, which seemed to be designed by nature for navigation, being possessed of extensive sea-coasts, excellent harbours, timber for ship-building, iron and copper mines, and all the other materials requisite for a navy, had given it up when they grew weary of piracy. The people of Lubeck carried off what they had to spare, and brought them salt, stuffs, and whatever they wanted from abroad. No ships were seen in their roads, but the vessels of that republic, or any warehouses in their towns, but what belonged to them.

The haughty spirit of Gustavus could not brook this dependence. He was determined to break the bands that cramped the industry of his subjects; but he set about it too precipitately. He shut his harbours against the people of Lubeck, before he had built any ships, or trained up any merchants. This put an end at once to all intercourse between his subjects and other nations; and such a total stagnation of business proved fatal to agriculture, that first of arts in all countries, and the only one then known in Sweden. When the husbandman had not those repeated demands, which till then had been a spur to his industry, the fields were suffered to lie uncultivated. Some English and Dutch ships, which arrived there occasionally, had not yet roused the old emulation, when Gustavus Adolphus ascended the throne.

He signalized the first years of his reign, by making useful alterations. Rural labours were revived; the mines were wrought with greater ardour; companies were set on foot to trade to Persia and the East Indies; the foundations of a new colony were laid on the coast of North-America; the Swedish flag was seen in all the seas of Europe, carrying copper, iron, wood, tallow, tar, hides, butter, corn, fish, and furs; and bringing home wine, brandy, salt, spice, and all sorts of stuffs.

This prosperity was but momentary. The wars of the great Gustavus in Germany soon checked the growing industry of the Swedes. His successors endeavoured to revive it; but it was again destroyed by fresh wars, which lasted till the death of Charles XII. During that long period, the kings aimed at nothing but arbitrary power, and the genius of the nation was wholly turned to arms.

The Swedes did not apply themselves to useful pursuits, till they had lost all their conquests, and till the elevation of Russia left them no hopes of making new ones. The states of the kingdom having abolished despotism, corrected the abuses of so faulty an administration. The rapid transition from a state of slavery to the most complete liberty, did not however occasion those violent concussions, which commonly attend such revolutions.

tions. All the alterations were made after mature deliberation. The first attention was paid to the most necessary professions, which, till then, had been unnoticed, or despised. The arts of convenience, or elegance, were soon introduced. Several masterly performances were published, treating of the deepest sciences, and worthy to be adopted by the most enlightened nations. The young nobility, in order to form their taste, visited all the states of Europe, which afforded any kind of instruction. Such of the citizens as had quitted their long ruined country, returned home with the talents they had acquired. Order, political economy, and the several branches of administration, became the general topic of conversation. Whatever concerned the republic, was maturely discussed in the general assemblies, and freely approved or censured in the public writings. Information was invited from all quarters. Foreigners, who brought any invention, or any useful knowledge, were kindly received; and it was at that favourable juncture, that the agents of the Ostend Company made their appearance.

The Swedes cultivate the India trade. Basis on which it is founded.

A RICH merchant of Stockholm, named Henry Koning, approved of their schemes, and procured the approbation of the diet in 1731. An India Company was established, with the exclusive privilege of trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope. The charter was only for fifteen years. It was not thought expedient to grant it for a longer time, that they might have an early opportunity of rectifying the imperfections incident to new undertakings, and to quiet the minds of many citizens, who were averse from an undertaking which they thought improper for men accustomed to their climate. In order to unite the advantages of a free trade with those of a privileged association, it was agreed, that the stock should be unlimited, and that each proprietor should be at liberty to withdraw his own, at the end of every voyage. As most of the adventurers were foreigners, it was thought but justice, to secure a profit to the nation,

by

by obliging them to pay the government 2250 livres* *per last*, upon the cargo of every ship.

Notwithstanding this duty, which nearly confined their trade to China, the proprietors divided much greater profits than any other Company ever did. This success determined the states when they renewed the charter in 1746, to demand 75,000 livres† *per ship*, in lieu of the old duty. These terms were punctually complied with till 1753; then the Directors, who felt the sweets of their situation, projected to make it permanent, by giving a firm consistency to the transient association that had intrusted them with the management of their affairs; and they contrived to have their scheme adopted by the assembled nation. It was not to be expected, that the proprietors would so readily assent to a system that abridged them of their liberty, and was the more to be dreaded, as it had proved fatal to other companies. They were, however, allured by the prospect of a more regular income, instead of a dividend which had for some years varied to an incredible degree; which was either so contrived with a view to make the project go down the better, or was a natural consequence of the fluctuation of trade. They were finally determined, by the indulgence the government shewed them, in taking no more than a duty of twenty *per cent.* upon tea, and all other India goods which should be consumed within the kingdom, instead of the 75,000 livres‡ which had been paid for six years upon every ship. This new regulation lasted till 1766, which was the time of the expiration of the charter granted twenty years before.

They had not delayed, till that period, taking measures for the renewal of the Company. As early as the 7th of July 1762, a new charter was granted for twenty years longer. The conditions were more advantageous to the state, than was expected by those who had not attended to the profits of that trade. The Company lent the government 1,500,000 livres|| without interest, and 3,000,000 £ at six *per cent.* The proprietors who advanced this money were to be repaid gradually out of the

* 981. 8s. 9d. † 3281l. 5s. ‡ 3281l. 5s.

|| 65,625l. § 131,250l.

the drawback of 112,500 livres*, which they engaged to pay for every ship they should send out. A duty of one fourth of the produce was laid on all such of their commodities as should be exported, out of the kingdom; and such as were consumed at home, were to pay the old duties, or such new ones as government should think proper to lay on them. This is the regulation that has subsisted ever since 1766.

The Company have fixed the centre of their business at Gottenburgh, whose situation affords facility for navigation which other ports do not possess. At first, their stock varied from one voyage to another. It is generally believed, that in 1753, it was fixed at nine millions †, though but six † were laid down. Those who were best informed, are of opinion, that the last regulation has really brought in ten millions || ; but we know nothing on this important point, except from conjecture ; for it never was laid before the public. As the Swedes were very little concerned in this stock, it was judged best to conceal the poverty of it ; and for that purpose, it was enacted, that any director who should divulge the names of the proprietors, or the sums they had subscribed, should be suspended, or even deposed, and irretrievably forfeit all the stock he was possessed of. This mysterious conduct is still observed. Indeed, the accounts of the directory are regularly laid before twelve of the chief proprietors, who are chosen once in four years at a general meeting ; but mercantile people will never consider this as a sufficient security ; and will always think it strange, that a free state should have opened such a door for corruption. Secrecy, in politics, is like lying ; it saves a state for a while, and undoes it in the end. Neither of them are of any use, but to wicked men §.

Though

$$* \text{ 49,218l. 15s.} \quad + \text{ 393,750l.} \quad \pm \text{ 262,500l.}$$

$$|| \text{ 437,500l.}$$

§ An operation upon which the Company could not throw a veil, is on the number of ships which they fitted out till the year 1766 inclusively. We reckon fifty-seven of them, whereof three sailed for Bengal, three for Surat, and the rest for China. All of them did not complete their voyage, five of them being unfortunately cast away.

Though the Company met with some misfortunes, the dividend kept up to thirty-two *per cent. per annum* upon an average. This whole profit was made upon sales that did not exceed six millions of livres * yearly. Eleven twelfths of those goods have been exported; and what little the Sweds have consumed, they have paid for with their own commodities. The scarcity of cash, and the few resources they had, would not admit of greater luxury, as will appear, if we consider the following particulars.

THE extent of Sweden is 6,900 square leagues, allowing, as they do in that country, but ten and a half to a degree. A great part of it is covered with immense lakes. The soil, which is most commonly a fat clay, is harder to till than sandy ground; but it bears more. The prodigious snows that cover it, shelter and cherish the plants. Unfortunately the winters are so long, and the days so short, that there is but little time for the labours of the field. Beside, as the men are taller and stouter than in other countries, they require more substantial food, and in larger quantities.

From these reasons we should be apt to suspect, that Sweden never was a populous country, though it has been called the *manufactory of human kind*. Probably, the numerous bands, who, under the so much dreaded name of Goths and Vandals, ravaged and subdued so many regions of Europe, were no other than swarms of Scythians and Sarmatians, who came thither in a constant succession by the north of Asia. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose, that that vast country was always as thinly peopled as it is now. Some historical proofs, which were laid before the States at their last meeting, convinced them, that, three hundred years ago, their country had more inhabitants than it has at present, though at that time they professed the catholic religion, which enjoins the monastic life, and the celibacy of the clergy. It appears, from a very accurate account taken in 1760, by order of the government, that Sweden, ex-

clusive of her German dominions, which are but trifling, has actually but 2,383,113 subjects; and that, in this number, there are 1,127,938 men, and 1,255,175 women. By taking the mean term, this makes 345 inhabitants to a square league. The two extremes are Gothland, which has 1248, and Lapland, which has but two inhabitants to a league.

The number would be greater in all the provinces, if they were not continually deserted by a great number of the natives, many of whom never return. There are men in all countries, who, either out of curiosity, or from a natural restlessness, and without any determinate object, love to rove about; but this is only the malady of a few individuals, and cannot be deemed the general cause of a constant emigration. There is a natural propensity in all men to love their own country, which is rather to be accounted for from moral, than from natural principles. An inherent fondness for society, the ties of blood and of friendship, an acquaintance with the climate and language, that partiality we are so apt to contract for the place, the manners, and the way of life we are accustomed to; all these are, to a rational being, so many attachments to the land in which he was born and educated. The motives must be very strong, which can determine him to break all these ties at once, and to prefer another country, where all is strange and new to him. In Sweden, where the whole power resides in the states, which are composed of the several orders of the kingdom, even that of peasants, every one should be the more attached to his country; yet emigrations are very frequent, and there must be some cause for them.

The class which of all others are most attached to their country, are the husbandmen. Agriculture flourished tolerably till Gustavus Vasa prohibited the exportation of corn. Ever since that fatal edit, it has constantly degenerated; and the endeavours used of late years to restore it, have not altogether succeeded. Government buys every year corn for home consumption; and that want may be long felt, as it is very difficult to breed large quantities of cattle in that country. They must be fed dry for nine months in the year; and hands

are wanting to cut up and to house that quantity of fodder which the long winters require.

The mines are not liable to the like inconveniences. They were long the chief support of the kingdom ; but are now dependent on the English and Dutch, who have lent large sums to carry on the works. A better management has gradually freed them from this bondage. The silver mines annually bring in 4500 marks to the state ; the copper mines yield 8000 ingots, of which 5500 are exported ; the iron mines yield 400,000 ingots, of which they export about 300,000. The last article might be easily increased, especially in the northern provinces, which abound with wood and water for the works, and where the long and hard winters are favourable to land-carriage. The states held in 1765 forbade the opening of any more mines, though no reason of political economy can be assigned for such a prohibition. We may presume to suspect, that it took its rise from the private and personal interest of some leading men in the diet. Their manufactures have not been better managed than their mines.

Till the happy revolution which restored the liberty of Sweden, the nation in general were clothed in foreign stuffs. At that memorable period, they were sensible how impossible it was to rectify this evil with their own wool, which was extremely coarse ; so they sent for ewes and rams from Spain and England ; and by the precautions that have been taken, they have not much degenerated. As the flocks multiplied, the manufactures increased to that degree, that, in 1763, they employed 45,000 hands. This progress has displeased some patriots, who thought it prejudicial to agriculture. In vain were they told, that manufactures promoted the consumption of the productions of the land ; that they multiplied cattle, and that the cattle fertilized the ground ; that there were in the kingdom but eight or nine towns, at most, that deserved to be called so ; and that their population, compared to that of the country, was but as one to twelve, which was not the case in any other country. These representations had no effect. The diet of 1765, from party spirit or ignorance, adopted the views of those who were for sending every body

back to the plough. To bring this about, they have shackled industry with all the fetters they could devise. The consequence has been, that the artificers are gone abroad to seek for employment, especially to Russia; and, by this ridiculous policy, Sweden has lost her manufactures.

Their fisheries have not met with the same fate. The only one that deserves to be considered in a political view, is the herring fishery. It only began in 1740. Before that time, the herrings did not frequent the coasts of Sweden. They then came in shoals to the coast of Gottenburgh, and have never forsaken it since. They annually export 200,000 barrels, which, at the rate of 20 livres * per barrel, amount to 4,000,000 of livres †. About 8000 barrels are sent over to the English islands in America. It is surprising that the French, who have more slaves, and are more at a loss to feed them, should never have encouraged the importation of so profitable an article.

The Swedish nation was not yet possessed of the herring fishery, when the importation of all foreign commodities, and the conveying their own from one harbour of the kingdom to another in foreign bottoms, was prohibited. That famous edict published in 1724, known by the name of *Placard des Productions*, restored navigation, which had long since been destroyed by the calamities of war. Their flag, which was unknown every where, was now displayed in every quarter of the ocean. Their seamen soon acquired skill and experience. Their progress appeared, to some able politicians, to be growing too considerable for a depopulated country. They thought it would be best to keep to the exportation of their own produce, and the importation of such foreign commodities as they wanted, and have nothing to do with mere freight. This system was warmly opposed. Some eminent statesmen were of opinion, that, so far from cramping this branch of industry, it ought to be encouraged, by abolishing every regulation that might tend to obstruct it. The exclusive right of passing the Sound was formerly appropriated to a few towns, distinguished by the name of *Staple*. All ports

* 17s. 6d.

† 175,000l.

situated

situated to the north of Stockholm or Abo, were obliged to send their commodities to one of these staples, and there to take in those of the Baltic, which they could have procured cheaper at first hand. Those odious distinctions, contrived in barbarous times, and tending to favour the monopoly of merchants, still subsist. The wisest speculators in matters of administration wished to see them abolished, that a more general competition might produce greater industry. But whatever might be the wishes of the nation with regard to trade, no person was desirous of having the army augmented.

Before the reign of Gustavus Vasa, every Swede was a soldier. Upon any emergency of the state, the husbandman left his plough, and took up his bow. By their incessant civil broils, the whole nation was inured to war. Government had but five hundred men in pay, who were always to hold themselves in readiness to march. In 1542, this small corps was increased to six thousand. The peasants, upon whom these troops were quartered, found the burden intolerable, and it was necessary to ease them of it. For this purpose, the uncultivated lands were incorporated with those belonging to the crown; and when they were cleared, these new defenders of their country were settled on them. This excellent institution has been continued ever since. Military men are not shut up in garrisons, to lead a life of idleness, as in other countries. From the general to the common soldier, every one has a house, and a spot of ground of his own, which he improves. The extent and value of this land is proportioned to the different ranks in the army. This possession, which they hold from the crown, is called *Bostell*, and is never granted but in the domains belonging to government. The army now consists of eight regiments of horse, three regiments of dragoons, two regiments of hussars, and twenty-one regiments of national infantry, that are paid in the above manner, and ten regiments of foreign troops, who are paid in money, and disposed of in the provinces, and in the fortresses beyond the seas: all these forces together amount to 50,000 men. This army is increased to 84,000 men, by the addition of 34,000 soldiers, who are kept in reserve, and have likewise their *Bostells*, and

by their institution are destined to supply the place of those of the national infantry who die, or are taken prisoners. Twenty ships of the line, with a proportional number of frigates, and a few galleys, complete the forces of the republic.

To make these forces act, the state has only a revenue of eighteen millions of livres *, which arises from a land-tax, the returns of the customs, duties upon copper, iron, and stamped paper, a poll-tax, and a free gift. This is very little for the expences of war, and the necessities of government; and yet it must also serve for the payment of debts.

These debts amounted to 7,500,000 livres †, when Charles XI. came to the crown. That prince, who was an economist, in a manner becoming a sovereign, paid them off. He went still farther, and redeemed several of the domains conquered in Germany, which had been alienated to powerful neighbours. He recovered the crown jewels, upon which considerable sums had been borrowed in Holland. He fortified the frontier towns, succoured his allies, and often fitted out squadrons to maintain his superiority in the Baltic. The events which followed his death once more plunged the nation into the confusion from which he had extricated it, which has continued to increase ever since; so that the government was in debt 82,500,000 livres ‡, for which they paid four and a half *per cent.* interest. Of this capital, eight millions || are the property of foreigners, five millions § belong to a sinking fund, established to pay off the debts contracted by Charles XII. a million and a half ¶ to some communities, twelve millions and a half + to private persons in Sweden, and fifty-five millions ‡‡ to the bank. The best calculators pretend, that this bank, which belongs solely to the state, and of which the nation, in a general assembly, has the entire disposal, has got as much by lending its paper to private persons, upon moveable and immovable effects, as administration owes it. In that case, the republic, in fact, owes but one third of the debt for which

* 787,500 l. † 328,125 l. ‡ 3,609,375 l. || 350,000 l.

§ 218,750 l. ¶ 65,625 l. ‡‡ 546,875 l. ‡‡ 2,406,250 l.

which it pays interest, for the support of public credit.

This credit is the more necessary, as there have not, since the last German war, been two millions * of specie in circulation all over the kingdom. Every thing is carried on by paper. Those who are intrusted with the management of the paper credit being sworn to keep every thing relative to it a profound secret, the quantity cannot be exactly ascertained; but, from the informations of the nicest observers, we may venture to affirm, that the sum total of bank notes amounts to no less than seventy-seven millions †.

Poverty was not the greatest evil which at that time distressed Sweden. Calamities of a more dangerous nature threatened her. Private interest, which had taken place of public spirit, filled the court, the senate, and all orders of the republic, with distrust. All bodies of men were bent upon each other's destruction, with unparalleled inveteracy. When the means were wanting at home, they were sought for from abroad; and a man was not ashamed to conspire, in some measure, with foreigners against his own country.

The unhappy situation of a seemingly free state kept up that slavish disposition which degrades most of the European nations; they gloried in their chains, when they beheld the sufferings of a people who had shaken off theirs. No one would be convinced that the Swedes had gone from one extreme to another; that, to avoid the mischiefs of arbitrary power, they had fallen into the confusions of anarchy. The laws had not provided means to reconcile the private rights of individuals with those of society, and with the prerogatives it ought to enjoy for the common safety of its members.

In that fatal crisis, it was expedient for the Swedes to entrust the phantom of a king, of their own creation, with a power sufficient to inquire into the abuses of the state, and find out proper remedies for it. This is the greatest act of sovereignty a people can exercise; and it is not losing their liberty, to commit it to the custody of a guardian in whom they can confide, whilst they watch over the use he makes of the power delegated to him.

Such

* 87,500L. † 3,368,750L.

Such a resolution would have raised the Swedes to the highest pitch of glory and happiness, and given the world a high opinion of their understanding and wisdom; but, by declining so necessary a measure, they have compelled the sovereign to seize upon the supreme authority. He now reigns upon his own terms; and his subjects have no other rights left, but what his moderation would not suffer him to strip them of.

This event is too recent to allow us to entertain our readers with an account of it; posterity must be left to judge of it. Let us now inquire into the connections formed in India by the King of Prussia.

The King of Prussia forms an East India Company at Embden. Character of that prince.

Fate of his establishment.

In that period of life, which exposes men most to the seduction of pleasure, the King of Prussia had the fortitude to prefer useful knowledge to the luxury and idleness of a court. An intercourse with the greatest men of his time, joined to his spirit of observation, insensibly ripened a genius, which was naturally active, and eager for improvement. Neither flattery nor opposition could ever draw him from his studies. In the earlier part of his life he formed the plan of his future conduct. On his accession to the crown, it was foretold, that his ministers would be nothing more than his secretaries; that the managers of his finances would only act as his clerks, and his generals as his aids-de-camp. Some lucky circumstances afforded him an opportunity of displaying the talents he had acquired in retirement. With a quickness peculiar to himself, Frederick, at once discovering and pursuing his real interest, attacked a power which had held his ancestors in slavery: He obtained a victory over that power in five engagements, deprived it of its best provinces, and concluded a peace with the same wisdom that he had commenced hostilities.

Though he ceased from fighting, he did not remain inactive. He even gained the admiration of those very people whom he had struck with terror. To give an additional lustre to his name, he encouraged learning, and derived advantages from all the arts. He reformed abuses

abuses in the courts of judicature, and dictated himself the wisest laws. A plain and invariable order was established in every department of government. Convinced that the authority of a sovereign is a common benefit to all his subjects, a protection which they are all equally intitled to, he gave to every man the liberty of approaching his person, and of writing to him. Every instant of his life was devoted to the welfare of his people; his very amusements were made useful to them. His writings on history, morality, and politics, abounded with practical truths. Even his poetry was full of profound and instructive ideas. He was considering of the means of enriching his dominions, when some fortunate event put him in possession of East Friesland, in the year 1744.

Emden, the capital of this little province, was reckoned, two centuries ago, one of the best ports in Europe. The English, compelled to abandon Antwerp, had made it the centre of their connections with the continent. The Dutch had long attempted, but in vain, to appropriate it to themselves, till it excited their jealousy to such a pitch, that they even endeavoured to fill up the port. It was in every respect fit to become the staple of a great trade. The distance of this little country from the bulk of the Prussian forces, might be attended with some inconveniences; but Frederick was in hopes, that the terror of his name would keep the maritime powers in awe. In this persuasion, he established an East India Company at Emden in 1750.

The capital for this new society was 3,900,000 livres*, chiefly subscribed by the English and Dutch, notwithstanding the severe prohibitions of their governments. They were allured by the unlimited freedom they were to enjoy, by paying three *per cent.* to the sovereign upon every sale they should make. The event did not answer their expectation; six ships sent successively to China brought to the owners no more than their bare capital, and a profit of ten *per cent.* in seven years. Another company, formed soon after in the same place for Bengal, was still more unsuccessful. They never

* 170,625 l.

never attempted but two expeditions; and all they obtained was a law-suit, which probably will be endless. Both these companies were annihilated at the breaking out of the last war.

This has been the only check the King of Prussia's greatness ever received. We know how difficult it is to judge of the merit of contemporaries; because we see them too near. Princes are, of all men, those we can least hope to be acquainted with. Fame seldom speaks of them dispassionately. We commonly judge of them upon the reports of servile flattery, or of unjust envy. The buzz of the many interests and opinions that are moving and shifting around them, confounds or suspends the judgment of the wisest men.

Yet, if we might be allowed to pronounce from a multitude of connected facts, we should say of Frederick, that he was able to extricate himself from the plots of all Europe combined against him; that to the greatness and boldness of his enterprizes, he joined the most impenetrable secrecy in the execution of them; that he effected a total change in the art of war, which, before his time, was thought to have attained its highest degree of perfection; that he shewed a fortitude scarcely to be paralleled in history; that he turned his very mistakes to better advantage than others do their successes; that he struck all the world dumb with astonishment, or made every tongue break out in admiration; and reflected as much lustre upon his nation as other nations reflect upon their sovereign.

This prince always appears formidable. The opinion he has given of his abilities; the indelible remembrance of his actions; an annual revenue of seventy millions*; a treasure of more than two hundred †; an army of a hundred and fourscore thousand men: All this must secure his tranquillity. Unfortunately, it is not now so beneficial to his subjects as formerly. He still leaves the management of the coin to the Jews, who have thrown it into the greatest confusion. He has never relieved some of the richest merchants in his dominions, who were ruined by his operations. He has taken the
most

* 3,962,500 l.

† 8,750,000 l.

most considerable manufactures of his kingdom into his own hands. His dominions are full of monopolies, which are the bane of all industry. His people, who idolized him, have been abandoned to a set of foreign plunderers. This conduct has occasioned such distrust, both at home and abroad, that we may venture to affirm, that all endeavours to restore the Embden Company will prove ineffectual.

" Frederick, Frederick ! nature endowed you with a lively and a vigorous imagination, with an unbounded curiosity, with a taste for labour, and with fortitude to support it. The study of government, of politics, and of legislation, occupied thy youth. Humanity, every where in chains, every where cast down, shed a grateful tear at the sight of your first operations, and seemed to console herself, in the hope of finding in you a powerful avenger of her misfortunes. She foretold, and blessed your future successes ; and all Europe gave you the appellation of the Prince of Philosophers.

" When you appeared on the theatre of war, the quickness of your marches, the art displayed in your encampments, and in the discipline of your troops, astonished all nations. The powers of Europe admired that rigorous discipline, which was uniformly accompanied with victory ; that mechanical subordination, which makes large armies act as one body, put in motion by a single impulse. Even philosophers, full of those hopes with which you had inspired them, and proud to see a friend to mankind, and to the arts, ranked among the order of kings, might perhaps have applauded your bloody successes : You was regarded as the model of kings, and of warriors.

" There is a title still more glorious, that of being at once a king and a citizen. Men can never be reconciled to those princes who confound truth with falsehood, and justice with passion or prejudice ; who distinguish not between good and evil, who regard the principles of morality in the light of metaphysical jargon, and who consider reason only as the declamation of an orator bribed by self-interest. Would to God, that the love of glory were extirpated from your heart ; that your mind, tired with great achievements, had lost its spring and its energy ;

nergy ; that the feebleness of old age would sink you to the level of the kingly herd ! But, what would become of your fame, and of those innumerable panegyrics, with which you have been loaded by the immortal voice of literature ? Here I must pause : Your life and reign will not be a problem in history. Open again your heart to those noble sentiments of virtue which were the delight of your younger years. Spend the evening of your days in ministering comfort to your people. Pave the way of happiness to future generations, by bestowing substantial benefits on the present. Prussia is indebted to your genius for its power : That power which you created, you have also maintained. Restore, therefore, to the state, what your glory owes to it.

" Let a free circulation of those immense sums, which lie buried in your coffers, invigorate the body politic. Let your personal treasures, which mischance may dissipate, henceforth be the basis of national wealth, which will never decay. Let your subjects, who now groan under the yoke of a violent and arbitrary government, feel the tender caresses of a parent, in place of the heavy exactions of an oppressor. Let exorbitant taxes upon persons and goods no longer extinguish both industry and cultivation. Give freedom to your slaves in the country ; and let the citizens of the Hans Towns multiply at pleasure. Let them enjoy, in tranquillity, their inclinations and their projects. Then will you confer stability on an empire to which your brilliant qualities have given a lustre and an uncommon extent ; you will be ranked in that small but respectable list of kings, who have been the fathers of their country.

" Seize the advantageous opportunity : Give peace to the earth. Let the weight of your mediation, and the power of your arms, force those nations, who are restless or refractory, to throw their weapons at your feet. The universe is the country of a great man ; it is a theatre corresponding to his talents : Be, therefore, a benefactor to the human race."

In monarchies, nothing can be great, fortunate, or happy, without the influence of the sovereign. But a monarch has it not always in his power to do what would contribute to the happiness of his subjects. He often finds

finds powerful obstacles in the opinions, character, and dispositions of his subjects ; but these opinions, character, and dispositions may doubtless be corrected : When we consider, however, the state of Spain, we find that they have been the chief obstacle to the success of a project so often formed, of rendering more prosperous the commerce of the Philippine Isles.

THE Philippine Isles, formerly known by the name of Manillas, form an immense Archipelago to the east of Asia. The mountains in these islands are peopled with savages, who seem to be the oldest inhabitants of the country. There appears to be some analogy between their language and that of Malabar ; from which it has been suspected, that they might possibly have come from that pleasant region of India. They lead quite an animal life, have no settled habitation, and feed upon the fruits and roots they find in the wood ; and, when they have exhausted one district, they devour another. Every effort to tame them has proved ineffectual ; because nothing is so difficult as to subdue a wandering nation.

*Settlement of
the Spaniards
in the Philip-
pine Islands.*

The plains from which they have been driven, have been successively inhabited by colonies from Siam, Sumatra, Borneo, Macassar, Malacca, the Moluccas, and Arabia. The different manners, religion, and government of these foreign colonists, evidently distinguish their several origins.

Magellan was the first European who discovered these islands. Dissatisfied with Portugal, his native country, he left it, and entered into the service of the Emperor Charles V. ; and, passing the straits that now bear his name, he arrived at the Manillas in 1521. He unfortunately died there ; but probably this would not have prevented the good consequences of his voyage, had they not been basiled by the following occurrences.

In the fifteenth century, whilst the Portuguese were engaged in discovering the East Indies and engrossing the spice trade, and those manufactures which had always been the delight of civilized nations, the Spaniards, by the discovery of America, secured greater treasures

than ever the mind of man had thought of coveting. Though both nations were pursuing their respective views of aggrandizement in far distant regions, it was not impossible that they might meet; and their mutual antipathy would have made such an event dangerous. To prevent it, Pope Alexander VI. fixed their respective claims in 1493, in consequence of that universal and ridiculous power which the pontiffs had assumed for several centuries, and which the idolatrous ignorance of two equally superstitious nations still kept up, that they might connect heaven with their own avarice. He gave to Spain all the countries that should be discovered to the west of a meridian taken a hundred leagues from the Azores; and to Portugal, whatever land they might conquer to the east of that meridian. In process of time, the two powers agreed to remove the line of separation two hundred and fifty leagues farther to the west, as a means of securing their tranquillity. The court of Rome was not sufficiently acquainted with the theory of the earth, to know, that as the Spaniards advanced to the west, and the Portuguese to the east, there was a necessity of their meeting at last. Magellan's expedition convinced this truth.

The Portuguese, though seamen themselves, did not imagine that they could go to the Indies any other way than by the Cape of Good Hope; and were greatly surprised to see the Spaniards come thither by the south sea. They were apprehensive for the Moluccas, upon which their rivals pretended to have a claim, as likewise upon the Manillas. The court of Lisbon was determined, at any rate, not to part with the spice trade. However, before they ventured to quarrel with the only power whose naval strength was then formidable, they thought it adviseable to try the method of negociation. They succeeded better than they expected. Charles V. who was frequently in want of money to carry on his expeditions, consented, for the sum of 3,420,000 livres *, to suspend the armaments against the Moluccas, till their respective claims could be adjusted. He even engaged, in case the decision was favourable,

* 149,625 £.

able, not to make any advantage of it till he had paid the money he had received. After this accommodation, the Spanish monarch was so intent upon his aggrandizement in Europe and America, that he lost sight of the East-Indies.

In 1564, Philip II. resumed the project of conquering the Manillas. The execution was committed to Michael Lopez de l'Egaspe. He gained a solid footing at Luconia, the chief of those islands, and laid the foundation of some colonies in the adjacent islands, particularly in that of Sibu, where Magellan had landed. The conquest of this little archipelago would in all probability have been finished by his successors, if they had been better supported, or even if they had not been under a necessity of employing the little assistance they had, in defending the Portuguese in the Moluccas. Dutch patience got the better of those weak, tardy, and ill-supported efforts. They only protracted the loss of those rich possessions, and left the Castilian power over the Manillas, which then began to be called Philippines, in a state of languor, in which it has continued ever since.

THE number of Spaniards in these islands does not exceed three thousand; the *Present
state of the
Philippine
islands.*
Mestees are three times as numerous. It is the business of both to keep in subjection about one million three hundred and sixty thousand Indians, who have been subdued, as appeared by the account taken in 1752. Most of them are Christians, and all pay a tribute of two livres thirteen sous*. They are dispersed in nine islands, and distributed into twenty departments, of which there are twelve in the island of Luconia alone. The capital, which at all times was called Manilla, is situated at the mouth of a large river, at the bottom of a bay, which is thirty leagues in circumference. L'Egaspe thought this a proper place for the centre of the state he was about to found, and accordingly made it the seat of government, and of trade. Gomez Perez de las Manignas inclosed it with walls, and built fort St James in 1590. As this

harbour will admit none but small ships, it was afterwards found expedient to fortify Cavite, which is distant but three leagues, and is now the harbour of Manilla. It is semicircular, and the ships are on all sides sheltered from the south winds, but exposed to the northern blasts, unless they keep very close to the shore. Three or four hundred Indians were formerly employed in the docks; but they have been so much increased within these few years, that men of war are now built there for Europe.

The colony is under a governor, whose authority lasts eight years, but is subordinate to the viceroy of Mexico. He commands the army, disposes of all civil and military employments, and may give lands to the soldiers, and even erect them into fiefs. This power, though somewhat balanced by the influence which the clergy and the inquisition assume in all the Spanish settlements abroad, has been found so dangerous, that many expedients have been devised to put a stop to its excesses. The best of these expedients is that by which it is decreed, that the memory of a governor, who dies in office, shall be prosecuted; and that when a governor is recalled, he shall not be allowed to depart till his administration has been inquired into. Every private man is at liberty to complain; and if he has suffered any wrong, he is to be indemnified at the cost of the delinquent, who is likewise condemned to pay a fine to the sovereign, for having brought an odium upon him. When this wise institution was made, it was observed with such severity, that when many and heavy accusations were laid to the charge of the governor, he was imprisoned. Several died under confinement, and others were released, only to undergo severe punishments. But corruption has since insinuated itself; and the person who succeeds is commonly induced by considerable bribes, or on account of the extortions he himself intends to practise, to palliate those of his predecessor.

This collusion has brought on a settled system of oppression. Arbitrary taxes have been levied; the public revenue has been lost by the people that were appointed to collect it; extravagant duties have made trade degenerate into smuggling; the farmer has been compelled

ed to lay up his crops in the magazines of the government; and some governors have carried their tyranny to such atrocious lengths, as to limit the quantity of corn that the fields were to produce, and to oblige the farmers to bring it to the treasury, to be paid only at the time, and in the manner their oppressive masters should, think proper. This tyranny has determined vast numbers of Indians to forsake the Philippines, or to take refuge in the inaccessible parts of those islands. It is said that several millions have perished through ill usage; and it is impossible to guess at the numbers whose very existence has been prevented by the want of culture, and consequently of food. The few who have escaped all these calamities, have sought for safety in obscurity and want. Some honest governors have endeavoured in vain, within the space of two centuries, to stop the progress of these barbarities, because the abuses were too inveterate to yield to a transient and subordinate authority. Nothing short of the supreme power of the court of Madrid, could stem the torrent of universal rapaciousness; but this only method has never been put in practice. This shameful indifference is the true cause why the Philippines have never been civilized, and have neither subordination nor industry. Their name would scarcely be known, were it not for their connections with Mexico.

Those connections, which have subsisted ever since the first settlement of the Spaniards in the East and West Indies, are nothing more than the conveying of the produce and merchandize of Asia to America by the south sea. Not one of these articles that constitute those rich cargoes, are the produce either of the ground, or of the manufactures of those islands. They get their cinnamon from Batavia. The Chinese bring them silks, and they are supplied by the English or French with white linen, and printed calicoes from Bengal and Coromandel. All the eastern nations may sail there openly; but the Europeans are obliged to conceal their flags. They would not be admitted without this precaution; which, however, is but a vain ceremony. From whatever port the goods are sent, they must be landed before the departure of the galleons. Those which come later can-

not be disposed of, or must be sold at a losing price, to merchants who must stow them in warehouses till the next voyage. The payments are made in cochineal and Mexican piaſtres, and partly in cowries, which are not current in Africa, but will pass every where on the banks of the Ganges.

They ſeldom deal directly with the Spaniards. Moſt of them are ſo diſgulfed with the fatigues of trade, that they place all their money in the hands of the Chineſe, who enriſh themſelves at their coſt. If, as the court of Madrid had ordered in 1750, theſe agents, the moſt active in Asia, had been compelled to be baptized, or to quit the country, all buſineſs would have been thrown into the utmoſt conuſion.

Some politiſians think this plan would not be detri-mental; an opinion that has been long entertaіned. The Philippines had but juſt opened a communication with America, when the Spaniards talked of giving them up, as being prejudicial to the intereſt of the mo-ther country. Philip II. and his ſucceſſors conſtantly rejeſted that propoſal, which was often renewed. The city of Seville in 1731, and that of Cadiz in 1733, en-tertaіned more rational noſtions. Both theſe cities ima-gined, and it is rather ſurpriſing that the idea did not occur ſooner, that it would be for the intereſt of the Spaniards to be direclty concerned in the trade to Asia, and that the poſſeſſions they had in theſe parts ſhould be made the centre of their operations. In vain was it urged, that, as India affords ſilks and cottons, which are ſuperior to theſe of Europe, both in workmaſhip and colouring, and likewiſe cheaper, the naſional manu-fac-tures would be ruined. This objec-tion, which might have its weight in ſome na-tions, ap-peared al-together fri-volous in this caſe, con-ſidering the ſituation of Spain.

The Spaniards, indeed, uſe none but foreign ſtuſſs and linen, either for wearing apparel or furniture. The-ſe continual demands muſt of neceſſity in-creaſe the industry, the wealth, the population, and the strength of their neigbour-s, who avail themſelves of theſe ad-vantages, to keep that na-tion, which ſupplies them, in a ſtate of de-pen-dence. It would ſurely be acting with more wi-dom and digni-ty, were they to adopt the Indian man-u-fac-tures.

factures. They would be preferable, both in point of economy and elegance, and would lessen that preponderance which must prove fatal to them in the end.

THE inconveniences attending new undertakings are readily removed. The islands which Spain possesses are situated between Japan, China, Cochinchina, Siam, Borneo, Macassar, and the Moluccas, and are within reach of forming connections with those several States.

What the Philippines might be come in industrious hands.

If they are at too great a distance from Malabar, Coromandel, and Bengal, effectually to protect any settlements that might be formed there; on the other hand, they are so near several countries which the Europeans frequent, that they could easily keep off their enemies in time of war. Besides, they are so far from the continent, that they have no neighbours who can ravage their lands, or interfere in their concerns. This distance, however, does not prevent them from being sure of subsistence at home. It is true, the Philippines are subject to frequent earthquakes, and they have incessant rains from July to November; but all this is no obstacle to the fertility of the ground. No country in Asia abounds more with fish, corn, fruits, vegetables, cattle, sago, cocoa-trees, and esculent plants of all kinds.

These islands afford even some articles fit for trade from India to India, such as ebony, tobacco, wax, those birds nests that are in such request, pitch and tar, a kind of white hemp fit for ropes and sails, plenty of excellent timber; cowries, pearls, and sugar, which may be cultivated to any quantity; and lastly, gold. There are incontestable proofs, that, in the earliest times, the Spaniards sent over to America large quantities of gold, found by the natives of this country in the rivers. If the quantity they now pick up, does not exceed twelve hundred weight in a year, this must be imputed to the tyranny of the Spaniards, who will not suffer them to reap the benefit of their own industry. A reasonable moderation would induce them to resume their former labours,

labours, and apply themselves to others of still greater advantage to Spain.

The colony will then produce for exportation to Europe, alm, buffalo skins, cassia, the *faba Sancti Ignatii*, a useful drug in physic, indigo, cocoa which has been brought thither from Mexico, and succeeds very well, woods for dying, cotton, and bastard cinnamon, which will perhaps be improved, and which the Chinese were satisfied with, such as it was, before they frequented Batavia. Some travellers affirm, that the island of Mindanao, where it grows, formerly produced clove trees also. They add, that the sovereign of the island ordered them to be rooted up, saying, he had better do it himself, than be compelled to do it by the Dutch. This anecdote looks very suspicious. What is certain is, that the vicinity of the Moluccas affords great opportunities of procuring the trees that bear nutmeg and cloves.

The foreign markets will furnish Spain with silks, calicoes, and other articles of the produce of Asia for their own consumption, and will sell them cheaper to the Spaniards than to their competitors. All other nations in Europe make use of money drawn from America, to trade to India. Before it can reach the place of its destination, this money has paid considerable duties, has taken a prodigious compass, and has been exposed to great risques ; the Spaniards, on the contrary, by sending it directly from America to the Philippines, would save duties, time, and insurance ; so that, by furnishing the same quantity of spice as the rival nations, they would in fact make their purchases at a cheaper rate.

In process of time, there would even be no necessity of carrying so much ready money from place to place, if they knew how to improve those islands to the degree they are capable of. For this purpose, they should recall to their sea-ports the nations who frequented them before they were invaded by the Spaniards, and obliterate the memory of the forty thousand subjects of China, who were settled in the Philippines, and were almost all inhumanly butchered, because they would not tamely submit to the horrid yoke that was laid on them. The Chinese would then desert Batavia, which is at too great a distance.

distance from their own country, and cause arts and agriculture to revive in these islands. They would soon be followed by many free traders of Europe, dispersed all over India, and who consider themselves as victims to the monopoly of their respective companies. The natives, excited to labour by the advantages inseparable from such a competition, would be roused from their indolence. They would be fond of the government that would promote their happiness: would gladly submit to its laws, and in a short time would become entirely Spaniards. If our conjectures are not vain, such a colony would be more profitable than a mere passive settlement, which devours part of the treasures of America. Such a revolution may easily be brought about, and must infallibly be hastened by establishing a great freedom of trade, an unlimited civil and religious liberty, and a complete security for the property of individuals.

This can never be the work of an exclusive company. For these two centuries past, since the Europeans have frequented the seas of Asia, they have never been animated by a truly laudable spirit. In vain have society, morality, and politics been improved amongst us; those distant countries have seen nothing but our rapaciousness, our restlessness, and our tyranny. The mischief we have done to other parts of the world has sometimes been compensated by the knowledge we have imparted to them, and the wise institutions we have established amongst them: but the Indians have continued to groan under their former darkness and despotism, without our taking any pains to rescue them from those dreadful calamities. Had the several governments directed the steps of their free traders, it is probable, that the love of glory would have been united to a passion for riches, and that some nations would have made attempts to render their names illustrious. Such noble and pure intentions could never be pursued by any company of merchants. Confined within the narrow limits of immediate gain, they have never concerned themselves about the happiness of the people with whom they traded; and no one has ever taken offence at a behaviour which could not but be expected.

How much would it redound to the honour of Spain, from

from whom perhaps no great things are expected, to shew a sensibility for the interests of mankind, and to endeavour to promote them! That nation now begins to shake off the fetters of prejudice, which have kept it in a state of infancy, notwithstanding its natural strength. Its subjects are not yet degraded and corrupted by the contagion of riches, from which their own indolence and the stupidity of their government have preserved them. These people must necessarily be inclined to good; they may know it, and, no doubt, would exercise it, having all the means of accomplishing it in the possessions their conquests have given them, in the richest countries of the universe. Their ships, destined to waft felicity to the remotest parts of Asia, would sail from their several ports, meet at the Canary islands, or separately pursue their respective voyages, as it suited them best. They might return from India by the Cape of Good Hope; but would go thither by the South Sea, where the sale of their cargoes would greatly increase their capitals. This advantage would secure to them a superiority over their competitors, who, for the most part, sail with false bills of lading, seldom carrying any thing but money. They would be furnished with refreshments in the river Plata, if they stood in need of them. Those who were in a condition to wait longer, would only put into Chili, or even go on to the island of Juan Fernandez.

This delightful island, which takes its name from a Spaniard to whom it had been given, and who took a dislike to it after he had lived there some considerable time, lies at 110 leagues distance from the continent of Chili. Its greatest length is but about five leagues, and the breadth not quite two. In so small a compass, and very uneven ground, are found a clear sky, a pure air, excellent water, and all the vegetables that are a specific against the scurvy. It has appeared, from experience, that all sorts of European and American corn, fruit, pulse, and quadrupeds, will thrive there to admiration. The coasts abound with fish; and, to add to all these advantages, there is a good harbour, where ships are sheltered from every wind but the north; and that never blows hard enough to endanger them.

These conveniences have induced all the pirates who have

have infested the coasts of Peru, to put in at Juan Fernandez. Anson, who went to the South Seas, with more extensive projects, found there a comfortable and safe asylum. The Spaniards, convinced at last, that the precaution they had taken to destroy the cattle they had left there, is sufficient to keep off their enemies, intend to build a fort on the island. That military post will become a useful settlement, if the Court of Madrid will but attend to her own interest. It is unnecessary to enter farther into particulars. It is evident how much the plan we have hinted at would conduce to the advantage of trade and navigation, and to the greatness of Spain. The trade that Russia carries on by land with China, can never acquire the same degree of importance.

BETWEEN those two great empires lies an immense space, known in the earliest ages by the name of Scythia, and since, by that of Tartary. Taken in its full extent, this region is bounded on the west, by the Caspian sea and Persia; on the south, by Persia, Indostan, the kingdoms of Aracan and Ava, China, and Corea; on the east, by the eastern sea; and on the north, by the frozen ocean. One part of these vast deserts is subject to the Chinese empire; another is under the dominion of Russia; the third is independent, and is called Kharism, and Greater and Lesser Bucharia.

The inhabitants of those famous regions have always lived by hunting and fishing, and upon the milk of their flocks, and have ever been averse to cities and a sedentary life, and equally so to husbandry. Their origin, which has been lost in their deserts, and in their wandering course of life, is not more ancient than their customs. They live in the same manner as their forefathers did; and if we trace them back from generation to generation, we shall find that the present Tartars are just like those of the earliest ages.

These people, for the most part, have adopted the doctrine of the great Lama, who resides at Putula, a town situated in a country which partly belongs to Tartary, and partly to India. This extensive region, where

mountains

mountains rise above mountains, is called Boutan by the inhabitants of Indostan, Tangut by the Tartars, Tsani by the Chinese, Lassa by the Indians beyond the Ganges, and Thibet by the Europeans.

This religion appears, from unquestionable monuments, to be of above three thousand years standing, and is founded on the existence of a supreme being, and the purest principles of morality.

It is said, the followers of that pontiff believe him to be immortal; and, to keep up the deceit, the deity never shews himself but to a few confidants; that, when he appears to receive the adorations of the people, it is always in a kind of tabernacle, where a dim light shews rather the shadow, than the features, of that living god; that when he dies, another priest is substituted in his stead, as nearly of the same size and figure as possible; and that, by means of these precautions, the delusion is carried on, even on the very spot where this farce is acted; and much more in the minds of believers, who are farther removed from the scene of action.

A sagacious philosopher has lately dispelled this prejudice. It is true the great Lamas seldom shew themselves, the better to keep up that veneration they have inspired for their person and their mysteries; but they give audience to ambassadors, and receive princes who come to visit them. But if their person is seldom to be seen, except on some important occasions, or on high festivals, their picture is always in full view, being hung up over the doors of the temple at Putola.

What has given rise to the fable of the immortality of the Lamas, is, that it is a tenet of their faith, that the holy spirit, which has resided in one of these pontiffs, immediately upon his death, removes into the body of him who is duly elected to succeed him. This transmigration of the divine spirit is perfectly agreeable to the doctrine of the metempsychosis, which has always been the standing system in those parts.

The religion of Lama made considerable progress in early times. It was adopted in a large part of the globe. It reigns all over Thibet and Mongolia; is almost universal in Greater and Lesser Bucharia, and

several provinces of Tartary, and has some followers in the kingdom of Cassimere in the Indies, and in China.

This is the only worship that can boast of such remote antiquity, without having received any mixture of other tenets. The religion of the Chinese has more than once been adulterated by the introduction of foreign deities and superstitions, which have crept in among the vulgar. The Jews have seen an end of their hierarchy, and their temple has been demolished. Alexander and Mohammed did their utmost to extinguish the sacred fire of the Gaurs. Tamerlane and the Moguls have in a great measure impaired the worship of the god Brama in India. But neither time, fortune, nor men could ever shake the divine power of the great Lama.

This stability and perpetuity must be peculiar to those religions that have fixed tenets, a well-regulated ecclesiastical hierarchy, and a supreme head, who, by his authority, supports those tenets in their primitive state, by condemning all new opinions, which pride might be tempted to introduce, and credulity to adopt. The Lamas themselves confess that they are no gods; but they pretend to represent the divinity, and to have received a power from heaven of deciding ultimately on whatever relates to public worship. Their theocracy extends as fully to temporal as to spiritual matters; but they think it beneath them to meddle with profane concerns, and always commit the administration of government to persons whom they judge to be worthy of their confidence. This has successively occasioned the loss of several provinces of their vast dominions, which have fallen a prey to their governors. The great Lama, formerly absolute master of all the Thibet, now possesses but a small part of it.

The religious opinions of the Tartars have never enervated their valour. It was to stop their inroads into China, that, about three hundred years before the Christian æra, that famous wall was built, which extends from the river Stoambo to the sea of Kamtschatka; which is earthed up every where, and flanked in different parts with large towers, after the ancient manner of fortifying. Such a monument shews, that the empire must at

that time have been very populous; but, at the same time, it seems to indicate, that there was a want of prowess and military skill. If the Chinese had been men of courage, they would themselves have attacked the roving tribes, or kept them in awe by well disciplined armies: If they had been skilled in the art of war, they would have known, that it was impossible to defend lines, five hundred leagues in length, on every part; and that if they were broken but in one place, all the rest of the fortifications would become useless.

The inroads, indeed, of the Tartars continued till the thirteenth century. At that period, the empire was conquered by those barbarians, under the command of Genghis-kan. That foreign sceptre was not broken till after eighty-nine years, when it fell into the hands of an indolent prince, who was governed by women, and was a slave to his ministers.

When the Tartars were expelled from their conquests, they did not bring home the laws and government of China. When they repassed the great wall, they relapsed into barbarism, and lived in their deserts, in as uncivilized a manner as they had done before. However, joining with the few who had continued in their roving way of life, they formed several hordes, which imperceptibly became populous, and, in process of time, incorporated into that of the Manchous. Their union inspired them again with the project of invading China, which was distract ed with domestic dissensions. The malcontents were at that time so numerous, that they had no less than eight different armies, under the command of as many chiefs. In this confusion, the Tartars, who had long ravaged the northern provinces of the empire, seized upon the capital in 1644, and soon after upon the whole state.

This revolution seemed rather to increase China, by the accession of a great part of Tartary, than to subdue it. Soon after, it was again enlarged by the submission of the Mogul Tartars, famous for having founded most of the thrones in Asia, and in particular that of Indostan.

The conquerors submitted to the laws of the people they had conquered, and exchanged their own customs and

and manners for those of their slaves. This has been considered as a remarkable proof of the wisdom of the Chinese government ; but it seems to be no more than a natural consequence of this plain and simple principle, that the lesser number must yield to the greater. The Tartars, in the most populous empire upon earth, were not one in ten thousand ; so that, to bring about a change of manners and government, a single Tartar must have prevailed over ten thousand Chinese ; which is hardly possible in the nature of things. We have sufficient proofs of the excellency of the Chinese administration, without having recourse to this. Besides, those Tartars had no settled customs and manners : it was not surprising, then, if they adopted the institutions they found in China, whether good or bad. This revolution was scarce completed, when the empire was threatened with a new enemy, who might become a dangerous one.

THE Russians, who towards the latter end of the fifteenth century, had conquered the uncultivated plains of Siberia, had penetrated through a series of deserts, as far as the river Amour, which brought them to the eastern sea, and as far as Selenga, near the confines of China, a country so highly extolled for its riches.

*Dispute of
the Rus-
sians and
Chinese in
Tartary.*

The Chinese were apprehensive that the incursions of the Russians might in time give them some disturbance, and they erected some forts to put a stop to this ambitious enemy. Warm disputes then commenced between the two nations, concerning their boundaries. Skirmishes were frequent between the hunting parties ; and an open war was daily expected. Luckily the plenipotentiaries of both courts found means to reconcile matters in 1689 : the limits were fixed at the river Kerbechi, near the place of negociation, 300 leagues from the great wall. This was the first treaty the Chinese had ever been concerned in, since the foundation of their empire. They granted the Russians the liberty of sending a caravan every year to Pekin, where strangers had never been allowed to come, but were kept off with mysterious precautions. It was easy to perceive, that the

Tartars, though they conformed to the manners and government of the Chinese, did not adopt their political maxims.

The Russians obtain leave to send a caravan to China.

THIS condescension did not inspire the Russians with moderation. They continued in their usurpations, and built a city thirty leagues beyond the stipulated limits, which they called Albassinskoi. The Chinese having in vain complained of this encroachment, they at last resolved to do themselves justice in 1715. The Czar being engaged in a war in the Baltic, and not having troops to spare to defend the extremities of Tartary, the place was taken after a three years siege.

The court of Petersburgh had the prudence not to give way to a fruitless resentment. They sent a minister to Pekin in 1719, with instructions to revive the trade that had been interrupted by the late disturbances. The negotiation succeeded; but the caravan of 1721 having behaved with no more prudence than the former, it was agreed, that for the future the two nations should have no dealings together but upon the frontiers. Fresh misunderstandings have again interrupted this intercourse, and they now carry on only a contraband trade; even that is but in a languid state, but it is thought the Russians are endeavouring to revive it.

The advantages they will derive from it are sufficient to induce them to surmount all the difficulties inseparable from such an undertaking. They are the only nation in Europe that can trade with the Chinese without money, and barter their own commodities for those of China. With their rich and choice furs, they will always purchase the things with which the Chinese can furnish great part of the globe. Independent of the articles they need for their own consumption, they may deal largely in tea and rhubarb. It would be both prudent and easy to re-export these two articles; because, when brought over by land, they will preserve a degree of perfection which they must lose in a voyage over those immense seas they must cross, to come from such remote parts of Asia. But to turn this trade to any advantage,

it must be conducted upon other principles than have hitherto been followed.

Formerly, a caravan went every year from Petersburgh, traversed immense deserts, and was met on the frontiers of China by some hundreds of soldiers, who escorted it to the capital of the empire. There, all who belonged to it were shut up in a caravan-fra, where they were obliged to wait till the merchants should chuse to come and offer them the refuse of their warehouses. Their affairs being thus finished, they returned to their own country, and got to Petersburgh three years after their departure.

In the ordinary course of things, the bad goods brought by the caravan would have been worth very little; but as this trade was carried on for the court, and the things were sold under the eye of the sovereign, the most trifling articles became valuable. Being admitted to this kind of fair, was a privilege which the monarch seldom granted but to his favourites. All wished to show themselves worthy of this distinction; and the way to succeed, was by over-bidding each other without discretion, every one being ambitious that his name should appear upon the list of the buyers. Notwithstanding this infamous emulation, the goods offered to sale were so trifling, that the produce, deducting the consumption of the court, never amounted to 100,000 crowns*. To establish this trade upon a more respectable footing, it should be left to private persons, who understand it better, and who would take more pains.

THIS would have been the right method, if the scheme of Peter the Great could have been brought to bear, which was to have opened a communication between Siberia and India, by independent Tartary. That great prince, who was always full of projects, wanted to form that connection by means of the Sirth, which waters the Turkestan; and, in 1719, he sent 2500 men to seize upon the mouth of that river.

Projects of the Russian court to trade to the Indies through independent Tartary.

There was no such river to be found ; its waters had been turned off, and conveyed through several channels to the lake Atall. This had been done by the Usbeck Tartars, who had been offended at the repeated observations they had seen making. So singular an incident determined the Russians to return to Astracan, whence they came. The court of Petersburgh was obliged to relinquish the project, and be content with the intercourse already formed with India by the Caspian sea.

*Intercourse
between Rus-
sia and the In-
dies, by the
Caspian sea.*

SUCH was, in remote ages, the way in which the north and south communicated with each other. The regions bordering upon that immense lake which are now very poor, destitute of inhabitants, and in a rude state, exhibit, to an attentive eye, evident and undeniable marks of former grandeur. Coins of the ancient Kaliphs are daily discovered there. These monuments, with others equally authentic, give an appearance of truth to the story of some Indians having been shipwrecked on the coasts of the Elbe in the reign of Augustus, which has always been looked upon as fabulous, notwithstanding the concurrent testimony of cotemporary writers. It is inconceivable how any inhabitants of India could sail on the Germanic seas ; but, as Voltaire observes, it was not more wonderful to see an Indian trading in the northern countries, than to see a Roman make his way into India through Arabia. The Indians went into Persia, where they embarked on the sea of Hircania, sailed up the Wolga, penetrated into Permia by the Katia, and from thence might go and embark on the Northern sea, or on the Baltic. Men of enterprising genius have existed in all ages.

Whatever may be thought of these conjectures, the English had no sooner discovered Archangel, about the middle of the sixteenth century, and settled a commerce with Russia, than they formed a project of opening a way into Persia, by the Wolga and the Caspian Sea ; which would be much easier and shorter than that of the Portuguese, who were obliged to sail round Africa, and part of Asia, to get into the Gulph of Persia. A further inducement to attempt it, was, that the northern

parts of Persia, bordering upon the Caspian Sea, produce much richer commodities than the southern. The silks of Chirvan, Mazanderan, and more especially Gilan, are the best in all the East, and might serve to establish excellent manufactures. But the trade of the English was not yet sufficiently confirmed, to surmount the difficulties that must attend so vast and so complicated an undertaking.

Some years after, a duke of Holstein, who had established some silk manufactures in his dominions, was not deterred by these difficulties. He wanted to get the raw silk from Persia, and sent ambassadors thither, who lost their lives on the Caspian Sea.

When the French were convinced of the influence of trade on the political balance of Europe, they also wished to procure Persian silks by way of Russia; but their fatal passion for conquest made them forget this project, as well as many others that had been suggested by men of understanding, for the welfare of that great nation.

Peter I. guided by his own genius, his own experience, and the informations of foreigners, could not but be sensible at last, that his subjects were the people who ought to enrich themselves by carrying off the produce of Persia, and in time that of India. Accordingly, in 1722, when the commotions first began, which overthrew the empire of the Sophis, that great prince seized upon the fertile regions bordering on the Caspian Sea. The heat of the climate, the dampness of the soil, and the malignancy of the air, destroyed the troops that were left to defend those conquests. Russia, however, did not resolve to relinquish her usurped provinces, till the year 1736, when the victorious Kouli-kan having conquered the Turks, was enabled to take them by force.

The Court of Petersburgh lost all hopes of carrying on any commerce with that part of the world, when an Englishman, of the name of Elton, formed a scheme, in 1741, for procuring that trade to his nation. This enterprising man was in the service of Russia. His design was, to convey English woollen cloths by way of the

Wolga

Volga and the Caspian Sea, to Persia, to the north of Indostan, and to the greatest part of Tartary. In consequence of his operations, he was to receive in exchange gold, and such commodities as the Armenians sold at an extravagant price, being masters, of all the inland trade of Asia. This plan was warmly adopted by the English company in Muscovy, and favoured by the Russian ministry.

But the English adventurer had scarce entered upon this plan, when Kouli-kan, who was in need of bold and active men to second his ambition, decoyed him into his service, and, by his assistance, made himself master of the Caspian Sea. The Court of Petersburgh, exasperated at this treachery, revoked, in 1746, all the privileges they had granted: but this was a poor remedy for so great an evil. The untimely death of the Persian tyrant was much more likely to quiet the minds of the people.

That great revolution, which once more plunged the Sophy's dominions into a worse state of anarchy than ever, restored to the Russians the dominion over the Caspian Sea. This was a necessary preliminary to the opening of a trade with Persia and the Indies; but was not alone sufficient to ensure its success. The Armenians made it next to impossible. An active nation, accustomed to the eastern manners, in possession of large capitals, extremely frugal in their expences, who had connections of a long standing, entered into the minutest details, and embraced the most comprehensive speculations: Such a nation could not easily be supplanted. The court of Petersburgh did not even expect it; but wisely determined to allure a colony of those crafty, laborious, and wealthy people to settle at Astracan. It is through their hands that all goods coming from Asia to Russia, over-land, always did, and still do pass. This importation is but small; and it will be long before it can considerably increase, unless some way can be found out to re-export the goods to some foreign market. To evince the truth of this assertion, we need but take a cursory view of the present state of Russia.

THIS

THIS empire, which, like all others, rose from small beginnings, has become, in process of time, the largest in the world. Its extent from east to west is 2200 leagues, and from south to north about 800.

Many of the inhabitants of this vast empire never had any government, and have none to this day. Those who, by violence, or from particular circumstances, are become the chief of the rest, have always been actuated by Asiatic principles, that is to say, have been oppressors, or arbitrary tyrants. They have conformed to none of the customs of Europe but the institution of a peerage.

These are undoubtedly the chief causes which have prevented the increase of the human race in that immense country. By the survey taken in 1747, there appeared but 6,646,390 persons who paid the poll tax; and all the males were included in the list, from the infant to the oldest man. Supposing the number of women to be equal to that of men, there will appear to be 13,292,780 slaves in Russia. To this calculation must be added the orders of men in the empire, who are exempt from paying this shameful tax; the military, who amount to 200,000 men; the nobility and clergy, who are supposed to amount to the like number; and the inhabitants of the Ukraine and Livonia, which do not exceed 1,200,000. So that the whole population of Russia does not exceed 14,892,780 persons of both sexes.

It would be as useless, as it is impossible, to number the people who rove about those vast deserts. As hordes of Tartars, Siberians, Samoiedes, Laplanders, and Ostiacs, cannot contribute to the wealth, strength, or splendor of a state, they are to be reckoned as nothing, or as very inconsiderable.

As the population is small, the revenues of the empire cannot be considerable. When Peter I. came to the crown, the taxes brought in but twenty-five millions *; he increased them to sixty-five †. Since his death they have not greatly increased; and yet the people are sinking.

*State of
the Russi-
an empire,
and the
means to
make it
flourish.*

* 1,093,750 l.

† 2,843,750 l.

ing under a burden that is above their strength, which is enervated by despotism.

It is high time that Russia should think of a remedy against this want of population and wealth. The only effectual one is agriculture. It would be of no consequence to encourage it in the northern provinces; nothing can thrive in these frozen desarts. The scattered inhabitants of that inhospitable climate will never have any thing for food and raiment, or be able to pay their tribute, with any thing but birds, fishes, and wild beasts.

Farther to the south, nature begins to wear a milder aspect; the country is more populous, and more capable of vegetation: yet all is languid through this immense territory, for want of hands and of incitements to industry. The soil wants nothing but the encouragement and indulgence of a wise government, to enrich its inhabitants. The Ukraine deserves a particular attention.

That spacious region, which formerly belonged to the Porte and to Poland, and forms now a part of the Czar's dominions, is perhaps the most fruitful country in the world. It supplies Russia with most of her home consumption, and articles of trade; and yet they do not draw the twentieth part of what it might be made to produce. The Cossacks, who inhabited that country, have almost all perished in fatal expeditions. Some attempts have been made to replace them by Ostiacs, and Samoiedes, not considering that it was spoiling the breed to no purpose, to introduce a puny race of little deformed creatures amongst hardy, tall, stout, and resolute men. It would be very easy to give encouragement to the Moldavians and Walachians to settle there, as they profess the same religion as Russia, and consider it as the seat of the Greek empire.

Nothing would be more conducive to cultivation than the working of the mines. These are to be found in several provinces; but there is a prodigious number of them in Siberia, though it is a low country, and the soil moist and marshy. The iron dug out of these mines is better than in any other part of Russia, and equal to that of Sweden. This would employ a number

of

of idle hands, and furnish excellent implements of husbandry for the use of wretched slaves, who are too often forced to dig a hard and stubborn soil with wooden tools. Siberia not only yields iron, but those precious metals which all men and all nations so eagerly covet. The silver mines near Argun have long been known; and others, both of silver and gold, have lately been discovered in the country of the Baskirs. It is the interest of some nations to neglect and stop up those sources of wealth; but that is not the situation of Russia, where all the inland provinces are in such a state of poverty, that they are scarce acquainted with money, that universal vehicle of trade.

The trade which the Russians have opened with China, Persia, Turkey, and Poland, consists almost entirely in furs, such as ermine, sables, white wolves, and black foxes skins, all of which come from Siberia. Some skins that are remarkably fine, which have very long glossy hair of a beautiful colour, or happen to hit the fancy of the buyer, sell at most extravagant prices. These connections might become more considerable, and be extended to other articles.

But the produce of the country must always be chiefly exported by the Baltic. Country articles seldom pass through the hands of the Russian merchants. They commonly want skill, stock, credit, and liberty. The import and export of all commodities is transacted by foreign houses.

No country is so happily situated for extending its commerce. Almost all its rivers are navigable. Peter the Great brought art to the assistance of nature, and ordered canals to be cut to join those rivers. The principal of them are now finished; some are not quite completed, and some are only planned. Such is the grand project of joining the Caspian Sea to the Euxine, by digging a canal from the Tanais to the Wolga.

Unluckily the means which render the circulation of all commodities so easy in the interior parts of Russia, and so much facilitate an intercourse with all parts of the globe, are rendered useless by those fetters which industry cannot shake off.

The government have kept in their own hands the buying

buying and selling of the most valuable productions of the country ; and, while this monopoly continues, the operations of trade will, of course, be unfair and languid. The relinquishing of this destructive revenue would contribute to public prosperity ; but that alone would not be sufficient, without the reduction of the army.

When Peter I. came to the crown, the military in Russia consisted only of 40,000 Strelits, undisciplined and ferocious men, who had no courage but against the people whom they oppressed, and against the sovereign whom they deposed, or murdered, at pleasure. This great prince discarded that seditious militia, and established an army, modelled after those of the other states in Europe.

Notwithstanding the goodness of its troops, Russia is, of all the different powers of Europe, that which ought to be the most cautious of entering into a war. The desire of acquiring an influence in the affairs of Europe, should never tempt the Russians far from their own frontiers : They could not act without subsidies ; and it would be madness for a nation that has but six persons to a league square, ever to think of selling their blood. Nor should the desire of enlarging their dominions, which are already too extensive, excite them to hostilities. Never will that empire reap the benefit of the labours of its reformer, and form a compact state, or become an enlightened and flourishing nation, unless they renounce the rage of conquest, and apply solely to the peaceful arts. None of their neighbours can force them to depart from that salutary system.

On the north side, the empire is better guarded by the Frozen Sea, than it would be by squadrons and fortresses.

A single battalion, and two field pieces, would disperse all the hordes of Tartars that should attempt to molest them on the east.

Should Persia rise from its ruins, all efforts from that quarter would be lost in the Caspian Sea, and in those immense deserts which separate that country from Russia.

To the south, the Turks are now enfeebled, and the seat

feat of war would be equally destructive to the conqueror and to the conqueror.

To the west, the Russians have nothing to fear from the Poles, who never had any fortified towns, nor troops, nor revenue, nor government, and have hardly any territory left.

Sweden has lost all that made her formidable, and has nothing left but the certainty of being stripped of Finland whenever the court of Petersburgh shall think it for her interest.

Should the genius of Frederick, which now makes in the north a counterpoise to the forces of Muscovy, descend to his successors, it is not likely that the ambition of Brandenburg should ever turn towards Russia. Those monarchs could never venture an attack upon that empire, without turning their forces also towards Germany, which would necessarily divide their strength in such a manner, that it could not act with efficacy.

The result of these discussions is, that it is for the true interest of Russia to reduce her land forces; and possibly the same might hold true, with regard to her navy.

The small connections of that empire with the rest of Europe were wholly carried on by land, when the English, in seeking a passage to the East Indies by the northern seas, discovered the port of Archangel. Sailing up the Dwina, they came to Moscow, and there laid the foundation of a new trade.

Russia had as yet no other communication with her neighbours but by this port, when Peter I. undertook to invite the traders who frequent the White sea, to come to the Baltic, the better to procure a more extensive and advantageous opportunity of disposing of the produce of his empire. His creative genius went still farther. He was ambitious of becoming a maritime power, and fixed his fleets at Cronstadt, which is a harbour to Petersburg.

The sea is not broad enough before the basin of the harbour. The ships that are coming in, are forcibly driven, by the impetuosity of the Neva, upon the dangerous coasts of Finland. The way to it is through a channel so full of breakers, that they cannot be avoided,

unless the weather is remarkably fine. The ships soon rot in the harbour. The sending out of the squadrons is greatly retarded by the ice. It is impossible to get out but by an easterly wind and the westerly winds blow in those latitudes almost the whole of the summer. Another inconvenience is, that the dock-yards are at Petersburg, from whence the ships cannot get to Cronstadt, without passing over a very dangerous flat, that lies in the middle of the river.

If Peter I. had not had that partiality which great men have, as well as others, for their own creations, he might easily have been made sensible, that Cronstadt and Petersburg are improper places for the naval forces of Russia; and that it is in vain to expect that art should force nature. He would have given the preference to Revel, which is much fitter for the purpose. Perhaps, too, his own reflections would have led him to consider, that the nature of his empire was not calculated for that species of power.

Russia has but few sea-coasts; most of them are not peopled; and none of them will ever practise navigation, unless there should be a change of government. Where then would they find officers capable of commanding ships of war?

Yet Peter I. found means to form a navy. A passion which nothing could controul, made him surmount obstacles which were thought to be invincible; but it was with more shew than utility. If ever his successors are in earnest for the good of their empire, they will renounce the vain glory of making a parade of their flag in distant latitudes, where they have no trade to protect, all theirs being carried on upon their own coasts, and not by themselves, but by foreign merchants. When the Russians thus change their system, they will save the needless expence of thirty-six, or forty men of war, and be content with their galleys, which are quite sufficient for their defence, and would even enable them to attack all the powers on the Baltic, if there should be occasion for it.

Those galleys are of different sizes. Some are fitted for the use of the cavalry, but a greater number for that of the infantry. Their expeditions are never retarded, nor

nor attended with any expence, as the whole crew consists of soldiers, who are all taught to handle the oar. They come to an anchor every night, and land where they are least expected.

When the landing is accomplished, the troops draw the galleys ashore, and entrench themselves in a body. Part of the army are left as a guard, and the rest disperse about the country that they intend to lay under contribution. When the expedition is over, they re-inbark, and repeat their devastations in other places. Experience has shewn how much may be done by these armaments.

The changes we have suggested are indispensably necessary, to put Russia in a flourishing condition; but this is not the only thing required. To insure the continuance of her prosperity, some stability must be given to the order of the succession. The crown of Russia was long hereditary: Peter I. made it patrimonial; and it became elective at the last revolution. But every nation would wish to know, upon what right its government is established. The claim that strikes the people most, is birthright. Whenever this visible sign is removed from the eyes of the multitude, there is nothing but revolt and disfention.

But it is not sufficient to give the people a sovereign, whom they cannot refuse to acknowledge; that sovereign must make them happy, which is impossible in Russia, till the form of government is changed.

Civil slavery is the condition of every subject in that empire, who is not noble: they are all at the disposal of their barbarous masters, as cattle are in other countries. Amongst these slaves, none are so ill used as those who till the ground; those valuable men, whose ease, happiness, and freedom, have been celebrated with such enthusiasm in happier climes.

Political slavery is the lot of the whole nation, since the sovereigns have established arbitrary power. Among the subjects who are considered as free, not one can be morally certain of the safety of his person, the possession of his fortune, or even of his liberty; which may, at any time, be taken away, except in some cases previously determined by law.

Europe has long been entertained with the project of a code of laws preparing for Russia. The august prince, who now governs that empire, well knew, that the people themselves must approve the laws they are to obey, that they may reverence and love them as their own work; and thus addressed the deputies from all the cities of her vast empire: *My children, consider well with me the interests of the nation; let us together draw up a body of laws, which may establish public felicity upon a solid basis.* But what are laws without magistrates? What are magistrates, whose sentence the despot may reverse according to his own caprice, and even punish them for passing it?

Under such a government, no tie can subsist between the members and their head. If he is always formidable to them, they are no less so to him. The strength he exerts to oppress them, is no other than their own united strength turned against themselves. Despair, or a nobler sentiment, may every moment turn it against him.

The respect due to the memory of so great a man as Peter I. ought not to prevent us from declaring, that he had not the gift of seeing at one view all the requisites for a well-constituted state. He was born with genius, and had been inspired with a love of glory. This passion made him active, patient, assiduous, indefatigable, and capable of conquering every difficulty he met with, in the pursuit of his schemes, whether they proceeded from nature, ignorance, custom, or obstinacy. With these virtues, and the foreign aids he called in, he succeeded in establishing an army, a fleet, and a sea-port. He made several regulations necessary for the prosecution of his bold projects: But though fame has proclaimed him under the sublime title of a Law-giver, he barely enacted two or three laws, and those few bear the stamp of a savage disposition. He never proceeded so far, as to combine the happiness of his people with his own personal greatness. After his noble institutions, his people were as wretched as ever, and still groaned under poverty, slavery, and oppression. He never relaxed, in any one instance, his despotic sway, but rather made it more oppressive, and bequeathed to his successors that detestable

able and pernicious notion, that the subjects are nothing, and that the sovereign is all.

Since his death, it has been repeatedly asserted, that the nation was not yet sufficiently enlightened to be benefited by liberty. Let flattering courtiers, and false ministers learn, that liberty is the birthright of all men; that it is the business of a well-regulated society, to direct and guide it to the general good; and that it is unlawful power that has deprived the greatest part of the globe of that natural advantage.

Catharine, who seems to have ascended the throne with ambitious views, begins to be sensible, that ravages committed in the desarts of Moldavia, and in some defenceless islands, bought with the lives of two or three hundred thousand men, will not endear her name to posterity. She is labouring to instil notions of liberty into a people stupified by slavery; but it is doubtful, whether she will succeed in the present generation.

With regard to the next, perhap, the best way would be, to chuse one of the most fertile provinces of the empire, to build houses for the inhabitants, to furnish them with all the implements of husbandry, and to allot a portion of land to each house. It would then be proper to invite free men from civilized countries, to give them the full property of the houses and lands prepared for them, to secure to them a subsistence for three years, and to have them governed by a chief who has no property in the country. A toleration should be granted to all religions; and, consequently, private and domestic worship should be allowed, but no public worship.

From thence the seeds of liberty would spread all over the empire; the adjacent countries would see the happiness of these colonists, and wish to be as happy as they. Were I to be cast among savages, I would not bid them build huts to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather; they would only laugh at me; but I would build one myself. When the severe season came on, I should enjoy the benefit of my foresight; the savage would see it, and next year he would imitate me. We are not to say to an enslaved nation, Be free; but we are to lay before their eyes the sweets of liberty, and they will wish to enjoy them.

I would by no means impose upon my colonists the burden of the first expences I had incurred on their account; much less would I entail the pretended debt upon their offspring. This policy would be as false as it is inhuman. Is not a state sufficiently rewarded by a man of twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years of age, who brings it the gift of his person, his strength, his talents, and his life? Must he pay a rent likewise for the present he makes? When he becomes opulent, he may be treated as a subject; but not till the third or fourth generation, if you wish your project to succeed, and if the people are to be brought to that condition, the advantages of which they have had time to be acquainted with.

In this new arrangement of persons and things, where the interests of the monarch would be blended with those of the subject, in order to strengthen Russia, she must aim less at glory, and sacrifice the influence she has assumed over the general affairs of Europe. Petersburgh, which has improperly been made a capital, must be reduced to a mere commercial staple; and the seat of government transferred to the heart of the empire. It is from such a centre of dominion, that a wise sovereign, acquainted with the wants and resources of his people, will effectually labour to unite the detached parts of that large empire. From the suppression of every kind of slavery, will spring up a middle state among the people, without which, neither arts, manners, nor learning, ever existed in any nation.

Till this is accomplished, the court of Russia will strive in vain to enlighten the nation, by inviting famous men from all countries. Those exotics will perish there, as foreign plants do in our green-houses. In vain will they erect schools and academies at Petersburgh; in vain will they send pupils to Paris and to Rome, to be trained up under the best masters. Those young people, on their return from their travels, will be forced to drop their talents, and embrace a subaltern condition, to get a livelihood. In all things, it is necessary that we should begin at the right end; and the way to do this, is to encourage mechanic arts, and the lower classes of men. Learn to till the ground, to dress skins, to manufacture your wool, and you will soon see wealthy families spring up.

up. From these will arise children, who, not chusing to follow the laborious professions of their fathers, will begin to think, to converse, to arrange syllables, and to imitate nature ; and then you will have philosophers, orators, poets, painters, and statuaries. Their productions will become necessary to rich men, and they will purchase them. While men are in want, they will work, and continue to work till their wants are satisfied. Then they grow lazy, and weary of themselves ; and the finer arts are in all places the offspring of genius and idleness ; for men fly to them when they have no other means of employment.

If we attend to the progress of society, we shall find husbandmen plundered by robbers ; these husbandmen chuse some from among themselves to oppose the robbers ; and thus we have soldiers. Whilst some are reaping, and the rest standing centinel, a parcel of by-standers say to the labourers and soldiers, You seem to be hard at work ; if you husbandmen will feed us, and you soldiers will defend us, we will beguile your labours with our songs and dances. Thus we have the bard and the man of letters. In proces of time, this man of letters is sometimes linked with the chief against the people, and sings the praises of tyranny ; sometimes with the people against the tyrant, and then he sings the praises of liberty. In both cases, he is become a citizen of consequence.

Let us follow the constant progress of nature. Indeed, it is vain to attempt a departure from it. If we do, all our efforts and expences will come to nothing, and every thing will decay around us ; we shall find ourselves in much the same barbarous state, from whence we strove to disengage ourselves ; and thus we shall remain, till some incident calls forth a natural police out of our own soil ; for, as to foreign aids, they can at most but hasten its progres. We can expect nothing more : let us, therefore, cultivate our own advantages.

In this we shall find another benefit. The arts and sciences of our own growth will gradually advance towards perfection, and we shall become originals ; whereas, if we borrow foreign models, we shall be ignorant

of the cause of their perfection, and we shall always be considered as imperfect imitators.

The picture we have drawn of Russia may appear to be an improper digression; but this may possibly be a favourable opportunity of setting a just value upon a power, which, for some years past, has acted so conspicuous and splendid a part. Let us now inquire into the connections the other European nations have formed with China.

*Connec-
tions of the
Europeans
with China.
State of that
empire with
respect to its
trade.*

CHINA is a nation in which there are fewer idle people, than in any other part of the world, perhaps the only one where there are none. Though they have the art of printing, and all the general means of education, they can shew neither a capital building, nor a beautiful statue, nor any elegant compositions in poetry, or in prose. They have no music nor painting; nor have they any knowledge, but what an observing man might acquire by himself, and by his industry carry to a great degree of perfection. Their customs not permitting emigration, and the empire being extremely populous, their labours are confined to necessaries. More profit attends the invention of the smallest useful art, than the most sublime discovery that only shews an exertion of genius. The person who can turn the cuttings of gauze to some use, is more esteemed than one who can solve the most difficult problem. In this country especially, the following question is frequently put, which is indeed too often asked among ourselves, *What is that good for?* When they are apprehensive of a scarcity, all the citizens exert their utmost efforts, and lose not a moment of time. Interest must be the secret or open spring of all their actions. They must, therefore, of course, be addicted to lying, fraud, and theft; and must be mean-spirited, narrow-minded, selfish, and covetous.

An European who buys silks at Canton, is cheated in the quantity, quality, and price. The goods are carried on board; where the dishonesty of the Chinese merchant is soon detected. When he comes for his money,

the

the European tells him, "Chinese, thou hast cheated me." "That may be," replies the Chinese, "but you must pay." "But," says the European, "thou art a rogue, a scoundrel, a wretch." "European," answers the Chinese, "that may be, but I must be paid." The European pays, the Chinese takes his money, and says at parting, What has thy anger availed thee? what hast thou got by abusing me? would it not have been much better to have paid at once, and have held thy tongue? Wherever men are hardened to insults, and do not blush at dishonesty, the empire may be very well governed, but the morals of the people must be detestable.

This disposition for lucre made the Chinese renounce the use of gold and silver coin in their inland trade. The daily increase of false coiners forced them to it, and reduced them to the necessity of circulating none but copper money.

Copper becoming scarce, though history has not informed us by what means, those shells were afterwards brought into use, so well known by the name of cowries. The government observing that the people were dissatisfied with such brittle money, ordered that all the copper vessels in the empire should be brought to the mint. This ill-judged expedient proving insufficient to answer the demands of the public, they pulled down about four hundred temples of the god Fo, and melted down all his idols. After this, the Court paid the magistrates and the army, partly in copper, and partly in paper. The people were so exasperated at these dangerous innovations, that the government was obliged to drop them. From that time, which was three hundred years ago, copper coin is the only legal money.

Notwithstanding the selfish disposition of the Chinese, their foreign connections were for a long time very trifling. The little intercourse they had with other nations proceeded from the contempt in which they held them. They grew desirous, however, of frequenting the neighbouring ports; and the Tartar government, less solicitous than the former for keeping up old customs, favoured this means of increasing the wealth of the nation. Expeditions were openly made: whereas, before, they were only tolerated by the selfish governors of

of the maritime provinces. A people famed for their wisdom could not fail of being well received. They took advantage of the high opinion other nations entertained of their taste, to recommend the commodities they had to dispose of; and their industry extended itself on the continent, as well as by sea.

China at present trades with Corea, which is supposed to have been originally peopled with Tartars. It was certainly conquered by them several times, and has been sometimes enslaved by, and sometimes independent of, the Chinese; to whom it now pays tribute. Thither they carry China-ware, tea, and silks; and, in return, bring home hemp and cotton, and an ordinary sort of ginseng.

The Tartars, who may be considered as foreigners, purchase of the Chinese, woollen stuffs, rice, tea, tobacco; for which they give them sheep, oxen, furs, and chiefly ginseng. This shrub grows only upon the highest mountains, in the thickest forests, and about the craggy rocks. The stem is hairy, strait, round, and of a deep red, except towards the bottom, where it becomes whitish. It grows to the height of about eighteen inches. Towards the top, it throws out branches which bear oblong leaves, that are small, woolly, jagged, of a dark green on the upper side, and whitish and glossy on the back. The age of the shrub is known by the shoots; and the older it is, the better. It has many virtues; but it is chiefly valued for being a strengthener of the stomach, and a purifier of the blood. The Chinese are so fond of it, that they never think they can pay too dear for it. The government sends out ten thousand Tartar soldiers every year to gather this plant, and every one is obliged to bring two ounces of the best ginseng gratis, and for the rest they are paid its weight in silver. Private persons are not allowed to gather it. This odious prohibition does not prevent their going in search of it. If they did not break this unjust law, they would not be able to pay for the commodities they buy in the empire, and consequently must go without them.

We have already taken notice of the trade of China with

with the Russians. At present it is of little consequence; but it may, and must become considerable.

Their trade with Lesser Bucharia is nothing more than bartering tea, tobacco, and woollen cloth, for the gold dust they find in their streams, when the snow begins to melt. If ever those savages learn to work the mines that their mountains are full of, their connections, which are now so few, will soon increase; and it is impossible to determine how far they may be extended.

The empire is parted from the Mogul dominions, and other parts of the Indies, by sands, mountains, and rocks, which make all communication impracticable; so that their inland trade is so contracted, that it does not exceed eight or nine millions *. Their trade by sea is more considerable.

It is supported by their silks, their tea, their china, and some articles of less consequence. Japan pays the Chinese in copper and gold: the Philippines with piastres; Batavia with pepper and other spices; Siam with woods for dying, and with varnish; Tonquin with silk, and Cochinchina with sugar and gold. All these several branches put together may amount to thirty millions †, and employ a hundred and fifty vessels. The Chinese get at least cent. per cent. upon these articles, of which Cochinchina pays half. Their correspondents, in most of the markets they frequent, are descendants of such of their countrymen as fled from their own country, when the Tartars made themselves masters of it.

The trade of China, which to the north does not extend farther than Japan, nor to the east beyond the Straights of Malacca and the Sound, would in all probability have been carried farther, if the Chinese ship-builders had not been so wedded to their old customs, and had condescended to receive instruction from the Europeans.

Those who first appeared upon the coasts of China were admitted alike into all the roads. Their extreme familiarity with the women, their violence with the men, and repeated acts of haughtiness and indiscretion, made them

* On an average, about 372,000 l.

† 1,312,500 l.

them forfeit that privilege; and now they are only suffered to put in at Canton, the southermost harbour of the empire.

This city stands on the banks of the Tigris, a large river, that on one side communicates with the remotest provinces, by means of several canals; and on the other, brings up the largest ships to the very walls of the city. Formerly our ships were to be seen there intermixed with the Chinese vessels; but now they oblige all European ships to stop at Hoaung-pon, four leagues from the city. It is doubtful whether the fear of being surprised induced them to take this precaution, or whether it was a contrivance of men in power for their own private interest. The mistrustful and rapacious disposition of the Chinese might give room for both these conjectures.

This regulation did not affect the personal situation of the navigators; they still continued to enjoy in Canton all the freedom that is consistent with public order. Their profession inclined them to abuse this freedom; and they soon grew tired of so much circumspection as is requisite under a government full of formalities. They were punished for their imprudence, and forbidden all access to men in power. The magistrate, wearied out with their perpetual complaints, would no longer hear them, but through the channel of interpreters, who were dependent on the Chinese merchants. All Europeans were ordered to reside in one particular part of the town, that was allotted to them. None were exempted but such as could somewhere find a person who would be answerable for their good behaviour. The restraints were made still more grievous in 1760. When the Court was informed by the English, that the trade laboured under scandalous hardships, they sent Commissioners from Pekin, who were bribed by the parties accused. Upon the report made by these corrupt men, all the Europeans were confined in a few houses, where they could treat with none but such merchants as had an exclusive privilege. This monopoly has lately been abolished; but the other grievances still continue the same.

These

These mortifications have not deterred us from trading with China. We continue to fetch from thence tea, china, raw silk, manufactured silks, varnish, paper, and some lesser articles.

TEA is a shrub about the height of our pomegranate or myrtle. It is propagated by seeds, which are sown in holes three or four inches deep. Nothing is used but the leaves. It bears great plenty when it is three years old, but fewer at seven. It is then cut down to the stem, and shoots out sprigs, every one of which bears nearly as many leaves as a whole shrub.

*The Euro-
peans buy
tea at Chi-
na.*

Tea is cultivated in most provinces in China; but is not equally good every where, though they are always careful to place it in a southern aspect, and in valleys. That which grows in stony ground is far preferable to what grows in a light soil; but the worst sort is that which is produced in a clayish ground.

The different degree of perfection in tea is owing more to the season in which it is gathered, than to the difference of soil.

The first crop is gathered in March, when the leaves are yet small, tender, and delicate, and this is called imperial tea, because it is chiefly reserved for the use of the court, and people of fashion. The second crop is gathered in April; the leaves are then larger and more spread, but of lesser quality than the first. The last and coarsest tea is gathered in May. It is closely packed up in common pewter boxes, that the air may not get at it, which would make it lose its flavour.

Tea is the common drink of the Chinese. The use of it was not introduced from vain caprice. Almost throughout the empire, the waters are unwholesome and nauseous. Of all the methods that were tried to better them, none succeeded so well as tea. Upon trial it was thought to be endued with many virtues, and extolled as an excellent dissolvent, a purifier of the blood, a strengthener of the head and stomach, and a promoter of digestion and perspiration.

The high opinion which the first Europeans conceived of the inhabitants of China induced them to adopt their

notion of tea, though perhaps they over rated it. We caught their enthusiasm, and it has continued increasing in the north of Europe and America, where the air is thick and loaded with vapours.

Though, in general, prejudice goes a great way, yet it must be allowed, that tea produces some good effects in those countries where it is universally drunk; they cannot, however, be any where so great as in China. We know the Chinese keep the best tea for themselves, and that they adulterate what is intended for exportation, by mixing it with other leaves, which resemble those of tea in shape, but may not have the same properties. We likewise know, that since the exportation has been so great, they are not so curious in the choice of the soil, nor so nice in the preparing of it. Our manner of using it may likewise contribute to lessen its virtues. We drink it too hot, and too strong; we put in a great deal of sugar, frequently perfumes, and sometimes pernicious liquors. Independent of these considerations, its coming so far by sea is alone sufficient to exhaust most of its salubrious salts.

We shall never be able to pass a definitive judgment on the virtues of tea, till it is transplanted into our own climates. We began to despair of success, though the experiments had been only made with seed, and it is said, with bad seed. At last, a tree has been brought over, the stem of which measured six inches, and it has been put into the hands of Linnæus, the most celebrated botanist in Europe. He has found means to preserve it, and he is in hopes he will be able to propagate it in open air, even in Sweden, since it thrives in the northern parts of China. It will be a very great advantage to us, if we can cultivate a plant at home, which can never suffer more by change of soil, than by growing musty in the long passage it must undergo, in bringing from abroad. It is not long since we had as little prospect of attaining to the art of making china.

*The Europeans buy
porcelain
in China.*

Some years ago, there were in the collection of Count de Caylus, two or three little fragments of a vase, supposed to be Egyptian, which being carefully analysed, proved to be unglazed china. If that learned

Learned man has not been misinformed, the art of making porcelain was already known in the flourishing days of ancient Egypt. But, without some more authentic monuments than a single fact, we must not rob China of this invention, where its origin is lost in the greatest antiquity.

Egypt is supposed, by many, to have the pre-eminence in point of antiquity, both in regard to its foundation, and to laws, sciences, and arts in general; though perhaps China may have as good a claim: But who knows, whether these two empires are not equally ancient, and have not received all their social institutions from a people inhabiting the vast region that divides them? Whether the savage inhabitants of the great mountains of Asia, after wandering about for many ages, in the continent that makes the centre of our hemisphere, have not insensibly dispersed along the coast of the surrounding seas, and formed themselves into separate nations in China, India, Persia, and Egypt? Whether the successive floods which may have happened in that part of the world, may not have hemmed them in, and confined them to those regions, intersected with mountains and deserts? These conjectures are not altogether foreign to the history of commerce, as that must, one time or other, cast a greater light upon the general history of mankind, of their nations, opinions, and inventions of every kind.

The art of making porcelain is, if not one of the most wonderful, at least, one of the most pleasing that men have ever discovered, as neatness is preferable to finery.

China is a species of earthen ware, the most perfect of any. It varies in colour, texture, and transparency. Transparency, indeed, is not so essential to it, but that a great deal of very fine china is not possessed of this quality.

China is commonly covered with white or coloured varnish. This varnish is nothing but a layer of melted glass, which must always be half transparent. This is titled glazed porcelain, and is properly what we call china; and the unglazed is distinguished by the name of porcelain biscuit. This is intrinsically as good as the

other, but is neither so neat, so bright, nor so beautiful.

The word *earthen-ware* suits the definition of china; because, like all other earthen ware, the substance of it is pure earth, without any alteration from art, but the mere division of its parts. No metallic or saline substance whatever must enter into its composition, not even in the glazing, which must be made of substances nearly, if not altogether, as simple.

The best china, and commonly the closest, is that which is made of the simplest materials, such as a vitrifiable stone, and a pure and white clay. On this last substance depend the closeness and compactness of porcelain, and, indeed, of earthen ware in general.

The china that comes from Asia is divided by the connoisseurs into six classes; the trouted china, the old white, the Japan, the Chinese, the Chinese Japan, and the Indian. These several appellations rather denote a difference to the eye, than a real distinction.

The trouted china, which, no doubt, is called so from the resemblance it bears to the scales of a trout, appears to be the most ancient, and favours most of the infancy of the art. It has two imperfections. The paste is always very brown, and the surface appears full of cracks. These cracks are not only in the glazing, but in the china itself; and, therefore, this sort is hardly transparent, does not sound well, is very brittle, but bears the fire better than any other. To conceal these cracks, they paint it with a variety of colours; in this kind of ornament consists its only value. The ease with which Count Lauragais has imitated it, has convinced us, that it is only an imperfect sort of china.

The old white is certainly very beautiful, whether we consider only the outside, or examine the inside; and this kind of china is very valuable, but very scarce, and but little used. The paste seems to be extremely short, and fit only for small vases, figures, and other ornamental china. It is sold in trade for Japan, though they certainly make very fine of this sort in China. It is of two different hues; the one a perfect cream colour, the other a bluish white, which makes it look more transparent. The glazing seems to be more incorporated into this

this last. They have tried to imitate this sort at St Cloud ; and some pieces have been produced, that looked very fine; but those who have narrowly examined them, have said, they were no better than frit or lead, and would not stand a comparison.

The Japan porcelain is not so easily distinguished, as most people imagine, from the finest sort made in China. A skilful adept whom we have consulted, pretends, that in general the glazing of the true Japan is whiter, and has less of the bluish cast than the porcelain of China ; that the ornaments are laid on with less profusion ; that the blue is brighter, and the patterns and flowers not so whimsical, and better copied from nature. His opinion seems to be confirmed by the testimony of some writers, who tell us, that the Chinese, who trade to Japan, bring home some pieces of china that make more shew than their own, but are not so solid ; and that they serve to decorate their apartments : but they never use them, because they will not bear the fire well. All china glazed with coloured varnish, whether sea-green, bluish, or purple, he believes to be Chinese. All the japan we have here comes from the Dutch, who are the only Europeans that are suffered to come into that empire. Possibly they may have picked it out of the porcelains brought thither every year by the Chinese, or they may have bought it at Canton. In either case, the distinction between the porcelain of Japan, and that of China, would be false in fact, and founded on nothing but prejudice. The result, however, of this opinion, is, that what is sold here for Japan is very fine china.

There is less doubt about what we call porcelain of China ; the glazing has a bluer cast than that of Japan ; it is more highly coloured, and the patterns are more whimsical. The paste is in general whiter, and more compact ; the grain finer and closer, and the china thinner. Amongst the several sorts made in China, there is one very ancient ; it is coarse, thick, and heavy. Some of this sort is trouted, and the grain is often dry and brown. That which is not trouted has a good sound ; but both want transparency. It is sold for old china, and the finest pieces are supposed to come from Japan. It was originally a better sort of earthen ware,

rather than a true porcelain; time and experience may have improved it. It is grown more transparent, and the colours being more carefully laid on, they look brighter. The essential difference between this and other china, is, that this is made of a shorter paste, and is very hard and solid. The pieces of this china have always at the bottom the marks of three or four supporters, which were put to prevent its giving way in baking. By this contrivance, they have succeeded in making very large pieces of china. Those that are not of this sort, and which are called modern Chinese, are of a longer paste, and finer grain, and are higher glazed, whiter, and clearer. They seldom have the marks of the supporters, and their transparency has nothing glassy in it. All that is made with this paste is easily turned, so that the workman's hand appears to have glided over it, as over a fine smooth clay. There is an infinite variety of this sort of China, both as to form, colouring, workmanship, and price.

A fifth sort is what we call Chinese japan, because it unites the ornaments of the porcelain, which is thought to come from Japan, with those that are more in the Chinese taste. Of this kind of china, some is ornamented with a very fine blue, and with white scrolls. The glazing is a true white enamel; whereas that of the other sorts is half transparent; for the Chinese varnish is never entirely so.

The colours in general are laid on in the same manner, both on the true china and in the imitations of it. The first and most solid of them is the blue that is extracted from smalt, which is nothing more than the calx of cobalt. This colour is commonly laid on before the pieces are either glazed or baked, so that the glazing that is put on afterwards serves as a dissolvent. All the other colours, and even the blue that enters into the composition on the pallet, are laid on over the glazing, and must first be mixed up and ground with a saline substance or calx of lead, that favours their ingress into the glazing. It is a pretty common thing for the Chinese to colour the whole of the glazing; then the colour is laid on neither over nor under, but incorporates into the glazing itself. Some very extraordinary fanciful

fanciful ornaments are made in this manner. Whatever way the colours are applied, they are commonly extracted from cobalt, gold, iron, mineral earths, and copper. That which is extracted from copper is a very delicate colour, and requires great nicety in the preparation.

All the sorts of China we have described are made at King-to-ching, an immense town in the province of Kiamsi. This manufacture employs five hundred furnaces and a million of men. They have tried to imitate it at Pekin and other places of the empire, but have not succeeded any where, though they employed the same workmen, and used the same materials; so that they have universally given up this branch of industry, except in the neighbourhood of Canton, where they make a sort of china, that is known here by the name of India china. The paste is long and yielding; but, in general, the colours, especially the blue, and the red of mars, are far inferior to what comes from Japan and the interior parts of China. All the colours, except the blue, stand up in lumps, and are very badly laid on. This is the only china that has purple, which has given rise to that foolish notion of its being painted in Holland. Most of the cups, and plates, and other vessels our merchants bring home, are of this manufacture, which is less esteemed in China than our deift is here.

We have endeavoured to introduce this art amongst us. It has succeeded best in Saxony. Theirs is true china, and probably composed of very simple materials, though prepared and mixed with more art than in Asia. This curious preparation, together with the scarcity of the materials, is no doubt the cause why the Dresden china is so dear. As there is but one sort of paste that comes from that manufacture, it has been surmised, and not without some degree of probability, that the Saxons were only in possession of their own secret, and by no means of the art of making china. What seems to confirm this suspicion is the great affinity between the Saxon and other German china, which seems to be made upon the same principle.

Whatever there may be in this, it is certain no china is higher glazed, smoother, better shaped, more pleasing to the eye, or more solid and durable. It will re-

fist a fierce fire much longer than many of the sorts made in China. The colours are finely disposed, and executed in a masterly manner; none are so well adapted to the glazing; they are blended with great exactness; they are bright, without being drowned and chilled, like most of those made at Sevre.

This reminds us to take notice of the china made in France. This, like the English china, is only made with frit, that is, with stones that are not fusible in themselves, but receive a beginning of fusion from the mixture of a greater or lesser quantity of salt; and accordingly it is more glassy, of a looser texture, and more brittle than any other. That of Sevre, which is by far the worst of all, and always looks yellowish and dirty, which betrays the lead they put into the glazing, has no other merit than what it derives from the capital hands that are employed for the patterns and the penciling. These great masters have displayed so much taste in the execution of some of the pieces, that they will be the admiration of posterity; but, in itself, this ware will never be more than an object of taste, luxury, and expence. The supporters of the manufacture, will always be a principal cause of its dearneſſ.

All china, when it receives the last operation of the fire, is actually in a state that has a tendency to fusion, and is soft and pliable, like red hot iron. There is none but what will bend and give way when it is in that state. If the pieces, when they are turned, are thicker, or project more on one side than another, the strongest will infallibly bear away the weakest; they will warp to that side, and the piece is spoiled. They guard against this inconvenience, by propping it up with bits of china made of the same paste, of different shapes, which they apply under or against the parts that project, and are most in danger of warping. As all china shrinks in baking, the substance of the props must not only be such as will shrink too, but such as will shrink neither more nor less than the piece they are intended to support. As the different pastes do not shrink alike, it follows, that the props must be of the same paste with the piece that is baking.

The softer the china is, and the more inclining to vitrification,

trification, the more it needs to be propped up. This is the great fault of the Sevre china; the paste is very costly, and very often more of it is wasted in props, than goes to the making of the piece itself. The necessity of this expensive method draws on another inconvenience. The glazing cannot be baked at the same time with the china, which therefore must go twice into the furnace. The porcelain made in China, and the best imitations of it, being of a stiffer paste, and less susceptible of vitrification, have seldom any occasion for props, and are baked ready glazed. They therefore consume much less paste, are seldom spoiled, take up less time, need less firing, and give less trouble.

It has been urged by some writers, in favour of the superiority of Asiatic china, that it resists fire better than ours; that all European china will melt in that of Saxony, but that the Dresden itself will melt in the India china. This assertion is utterly false, if taken in its full extent. Few porcelains of china stand the fire so well as the Dresden; they spoil and bubble in the fire, which bakes that made by Count Lauragais; but that is of very little consequence. China is not intended to go back into the furnace when once it comes out, nor is it destined to bear the action of an intense fire.

It is in point of solidity that the foreign china truly excels that of Europe; it is by the property of heating quicker, and with less risk, and safely bearing the sudden impression of cold or hot liquors; it is on account of the ease with which it is moulded and baked, which is an inestimable advantage, as they can make pieces of all sizes with great ease, and bake them without any risk, that they can afford them so cheap as to render them of general use, and consequently an object of a more extensive trade.

Another great advantage of the India china is, that the same paste is very useful for making crucibles, and a thousand such implements used in the other arts. These vessels not only resist the fire longest, but communicate nothing of their substance to what is melted in them. Their substance is so pure, so white, so compact, and so hard, that it will scarcely melt at all, and gives no tinge to any thing.

France is at the eve of enjoying all these advantages. It is certain that Count Lauragais, who has long been in search of the secret of the Chinese has at last made some china that is very like it. His materials have the same properties ; and if they are not exactly the same, at least they are species of the same genus. Like the Chinese, he can make his paste long or short, and follow either his own or some other process. His china is equal to that of the Chinese in point of plianceness, and is superior to it in point of glazing ; perhaps too it takes the colours better. If he can bring it to have as fine and as white a grain, we may give up the porcelain of China ; but we cannot so easily abandon their silk.

The Europeans buy silks in China.

THE annals of that empire ascribe the discovery of silk to one of the wives of the emperor Hoangti. The empresses amused themselves with breeding worms, drawing the silk, and working it. It is even said, that in the interior part of the palace, there was a piece of ground which was set apart for the culture of mulberry trees. The empress, attended by the chief ladies of her court, went herself and gathered the leaves of the lower branches, that were within her reach. This wise policy so much promoted this branch of industry, that the nation, which before was only clothed in skins, soon appeared dressed in silk. Plenty was soon followed by perfection. They were indebted for this last advantage to the writings of some ingenious men, and even of some ministers, who did not think it beneath them to attend to this new art. All China learnt, from their theory, every thing belonging to it.

The art of breeding silk-worms, and of spinning and weaving their silk, spread from China to India and Persia, where it made no very rapid progress; if it had, Rome would not, at the end of the third century, have given a pound of gold for a pound of silk. Greece having adopted this branch of industry in the eighth century, silks became a little more known, but did not grow common. They were long considered as an article of grandeur, and reserved for the most eminent stations, and the greatest solemnities. At last, Roger king

of Sicily sent for workmen from Athens; and the culture of the mulberry tree soon extended from that island to the neighbouring continent. Other countries in Europe wished to partake of an advantage that procured so much wealth to Italy, and they attained to it after several fruitless attempts. However, from the nature of the climate, or some other cause, it has not succeeded every where alike.

The silks of Naples, Sicily, and Reggio, whether in organzin, or in tram, are all ordinary silks; but they are useful, and even necessary for brocades, for embroidery, and for all works that require strong silk.

The other Italian silks, those of Novi, Venice, Tuscany, Milan, Montferrat, Bergamo, and Piedmont, are used in organzin for the warp, though they are not all equally fine and good. The Bologna silks were long preferred to all the rest. Since those of Piedmont have been improved, they justly claim the preference, as being the most even, the finest, and the lightest. Those of Bergamo come nearest to them.

Though the Spanish silks in general are very fine, those of Valencia are by much the best. They are all fit for any kind of work; their only fault is being rather too oily, which is a great detriment to the dye.

The French silks excel most others in Europe, and are inferior to none but those of Piedmont and Bergamo in point of lightness. In other respects, they are brighter coloured than those of Piedmont; and more even and stronger than those of Bergamo. Some years ago, France produced six thousand quintals of silk, which sold from fifteen to twenty-one livres * a pound of fourteen ounces. At the average of eighteen livres †, it produced an income of ten millions. ‡ When the new plantations have made the progress that is expected from them, France will be eased of the annual outgoings for this article, which are still considerable ||.

The variety of silks produced in Europe has not yet enabled

* From about 13 s. to about 18 s. 6 d.

† 15 s. 9 d. † 437,500 l.

|| The books of the Custom-house evidence, that, since 1739 till 1746, that kingdom has bought every year 768,024 pounds of silk, 137,734 pounds of coarse cloth, and 3457 pounds of unwrought silk.

enabled us to do without the Chinese. Though, in general, it is uneven and heavy, it will always be in request for its whiteness. It is generally thought to derive this advantage from nature; but it is more natural to suppose, that when they draw the silk, the Chinese put some ingredient into the basin, that has the property of expelling all heterogeneous substances or at least the coarsest parts. The little waste there is in this silk, compared to any other, when it is boiled for dying, seems to give great weight to this conjecture.

However this be, the Chinese silk is so inimitably white, that no other will do for blondes and gauzes. All our endeavours to substitute our own in the blonde manufactures, have been in vain, whether we have made use of prepared or unprepared silk. The trials upon gauze have not been quite so unsuccessful. The whitest French and Italian silks have been tried, and seemed to answer pretty well; but neither the colour nor the dressing were so perfect as with the Chinese silk.

In the last century, the Europeans drew very little silk from China. Our own was sufficient for black and coloured gauze, and for cat-gut, that was then in fashion. The taste that has prevailed for these forty years, and particularly the last twenty-five, for white gauzes and blondes, has gradually increased the consumption of that eastern commodity. In later times, it has amounted to eighty thousand weight a-year, of which France has always taken near three-fourths. This importation has increased to such a degree, that, in 1766, the English alone imported a hundred and four thousand weight: as it could not be all consumed in gauze and blonde, the manufacturers have used it for tabbies and hosiery. The stockings made of this silk are of a beautiful white that never changes, but are not near so fine as others.

Besides this silk, so remarkable for its whiteness, which comes chiefly from the province of Tche-Kiang, and is known in Europe by the name of Nankeen silk, which is the place where most of it is prepared, China produces ordinary silks, which we call Canton. As these are only fit for some kinds of tram, and are as dear as our own, which answers the same purpose, very few

few are imported. What the English and Dutch bring home, does not exceed five or six thousand. The manufactured silks are a much more considerable article.

The Chinese are as ingenious in weaving their silks as they are in preparing them. This does not extend to those that are mixed with gold and silver. Their artists have never known how to draw or spin these metals; and their ingenuity goes no further than rolling up their silks in gilt paper, or putting them upon the paper after they are wove. Both methods are equally bad.

Though, in general, men are more apt to be taken with glitter than with true excellence, we have never been tempted to buy these stuffs. We have been equally disgusted at the awkwardness of their patterns. They exhibit nothing but distorted figures, and unmeaning groups; they discover not any idea in the disposition of the lights and shades, nor any of that elegance and ease that appear in the works of our good artists. There is a stiffness and a want of freedom in all they do, that is displeasing to persons of any taste: all savours of their particular turn of mind, which is destitute of vivacity and elevation.

The only thing that makes us bear with those faults, in all such of their works as represent flowers, birds, or trees, is, that none of those objects are raised. The figures are painted upon the silk itself, with indelible colours; and yet the deception is so complete, that all these objects appear to be brocaded or embroidered.

As for their plain silks, they want no recommendation, for they are perfect in their kind, and so are their colours, especially the green and the red. The white of their damasks has something extremely pleasing. The Chinese use for them none but the silk of Tche-Kiang. They thoroughly boil the warp, as we do, but only half-boil the woof. This method gives the damask more substance and stiffness. It has a reddish cast, without being yellow, which looks delightfully, and has not that glare that dazzles the sight. This pleasing white is likewise observable in the Chinese varnish.

The Europeans buy varnished works, and paper in China.

VARNISH is a kind of liquid gum, of a reddish colour. That of Japan is preferable to that of Tonquin and Siam; and these are greatly superior to that of Cambodia. The Chinese buy it at all these markets because what several of their own provinces afford is not sufficient for their consumption.

The tree that yields this gum is called Tsi-chu, and resembles the ash, both in the bark and the leaf. It never grows above fifteen feet, and the stem commonly measures two feet and a half. It bears neither flowers nor fruit, but is propagated in the following manner:

In the spring, when the sap of the Tsi-chu begins to shew itself, they chuse the strongest shoot that grows out of the stem, and daub it all over with yellow earth; then wrap it round with a mat, to protect it from the impression of the air. If it strikes root quickly, they cut it off, and plant it in autumn; but if it proves backward, they put it off to another opportunity. At whatever season it is done, the young plant must be preserved from the ants, which is done by filling the hole with ashes.

The Tsi-chu yields no varnish, till it is seven or eight years old, and then it comes in summer. It distils from incisions made at different distances in the bark, and runs into a shell that is fixed at each incision. They reckon it a good crop, when they get twenty pounds of varnish in one night out of a thousand trees. This gum is so prejudicial, that those who work with it are obliged to use constant precautions, to guard against its malignancy. The workmen rub their hands and faces with rape oil, before they begin and after they have done their work, and wear a mask, gloves, boots, and a breast-plate.

There are two ways of using the varnish. The first is to rub the wood with a particular sort of oil they have in China; and whenever it is dry, they lay on the varnish. It is so transparent, that the veins of the wood are seen through it, if it is laid on but two or three times. If it is repeatedly laid on it, it may be brought to shine like a looking glas. The other way is more complicated. By means of mastick, they glue a kind of pasteboard over the wood. On this smooth and solid ground, they spread several layers of varnish. It must be neither too thick

thick nor too liquid ; and, in this just medium, the skill of the artist principally consists.

Whichever way the varnish is laid on, it effectually preserves the wood from decaying. The worm can hardly get at it, and the damp not at all ; and, with a little care, no smell will remain in it.

This varnish is as pleasant as it is solid. It will take gold and silver, and all the different colours. Upon it are painted figures, landscapes, palaces, hunting parties, and battles. In short, it would want nothing, if the badness of the Chinese drawings did not generally spoil it.

Varnishing requires much pains, and constant attention. The varnish must be laid on nine or ten times at least, and cannot be spread too thin. There must be a sufficient interval between the layers, that they may have time to dry. A longer time still must be allowed between the last layer and the polishing, painting, and gilding. A whole summer is hardly sufficient for all this process at Nanking, whose manufactures supply the court, and the chief cities of the empire. It goes on quicker at Canton. As there is a great demand of these works for Europe, and as the Europeans will have them made their own way, and allow but a short time to complete them, they are hurried over. As the artist has not time to make them good, all his ambition is to make them pleasing to the eye. Paper is not subject to the same imperfections.

Originally the Chinese wrote with a steel bodkin upon wooden tablets, which being tacked together, made a volume. They afterwards traced their characters upon pieces of silk or linen, cut as long and as broad as they chuse them. At last they found out the secret of making paper, about sixteen hundred years ago.

It is generally thought, that this paper is made with silk ; but whoever is acquainted with the practical part of the art, must know, that it is impossible to divide silk, so as that it can be wrought into an uniform paste. The good Chinese paper is made with cotton, and would be equal, if not preferable, to ours, if it was as durable.

The ordinary paper, which is not intended for writing, is made of the first or second bark of the mulberry tree, the elm, the cotton tree, and chiefly of the bamboo.

These substances, after rotting in muddy water, are buried in lime; then bleached in the sun, and boiled in coppers to a fluid paste, which is spread upon hurdles, and hardens into sheets, that measure ten or twelve feet, or more. This is the paper that the Chinese use for furniture. It has a very pleasing effect by its brilliancy, and by the variety of forms into which their ingenuity has found means to turn it*.

Though this paper is apt to crack, to take the damp, or to be worm-eaten, it is become an article of trade. Europe has borrowed from Asia the notion of furnishing closets, and making screens with it. That taste, however, now begins to wear off. We already discard the Chinese for the English paper, and shall certainly keep to that, when it has attained a higher degree of perfection. The French begin to imitate this novelty; and probably all nations will adopt it.

Besides the articles already mentioned, the Europeans bring from China, ink, camphor, borax, rhubarb, gum-lac, and rattans, a kind of cane that serves to make arm-chairs; and formerly they brought gold.

In Europe a mark of gold is worth about fourteen marks and a half of silver. If there was a country where it was worth twenty, our merchants would carry gold thither to change it with silver. They would bring us back that silver, to change it with us for gold, which they would again carry abroad for the same purpose. They would go on so, till the relative value of the two metals came to be much the same in both countries. It was upon this principle, that we continued for a great while to send silver to China, to barter it for gold. We got 45 per cent. by this traffic. It was never carried on by the charter companies; because the profit they made upon the markets was so much greater than this,

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* To glaze their paper, the Chinese do not use paste as we do, but allum water, which gives it an extraordinary lustre. If they want to silver it, they reduce to dust ifing-glas and allum mixed together, and throw gently that dust on a leaf, done over with paste made up of the skin of an ox mixed with allum. At the particles of the ifing-glas may stick to it. When the leaf is dry, they rub it with the tow of fresh cotton, in order to smooth it, and to rub off the superfluity of the ifing-glas.

as great as it may appear, that they never thought it worth their while to be concerned in it. Their agents, who had not their choice, attended to these speculations for their own profit. They pursued them with such eagerness, that in a short time the traffic did not bring in enough to be worth continuing. Gold is dearer or cheaper at Canton, according to the season of the year: it is much cheaper from the beginning of February to the end of May, than the rest of the year, when the road is full of foreign ships. Yet in the most favourable season, no more than eighteen *per cent.* is to be got, which is not enough to tempt any body. The only agents who have not been sufferers by the cessations of this trade, are those of the French Company, who were never allowed to be concerned in it. The directors reserved that profit for themselves alone. Many attempted it; but Caustanier was the only one who acted as a capital trader. He sent goods to Mexico; these were sold for piastres, which were carried to Acapulco, then to the Philippines, and from thence to China, where they were bartered for gold. That able man, by this judicious circulation, had opened a track, which it is surprising nobody else has since pursued.

All the European nations, who pass the Cape of Good Hope, go to China. The Portuguese first landed there. The Chinese gave them the town of Macao, which was built upon a barren and rugged spot, on the point of a little island, at the mouth of the river of Canton, and with it a territory of about three miles in circumference. They obtained the disposal of the road, which is too narrow, but safe and commodious, engaging themselves to pay to the empire all the duties to be levied on the ships that should come in; and they purchased the freedom of erecting fortifications, by engaging to pay an annual tribute of 37,500 livres*. As long as the court of Lisbon maintained the sovereignty of the Indian seas, this place was a famous mart. It decayed in proportion to the power of the Portuguese, and insensibly came to nothing. Macao has no farther connection with the mother country, and has no navigation but the fitting out of three small vessels, one for

Timor, and two for Goa. Till 1744, the poor remain of that once flourishing colony still enjoyed some kind of independence. The murder of a Chinese determined the viceroy of Canton to apply to his court for a magistrate to instruct and govern the barbarians of Macao; these were the very words of his petition. The court sent a Mandarine, who took possession of the town in the name of his master. He despised to live among fo- reigners, who are always held in great contempt, and fixed his residence at the distance of a league from the town.

The Dutch met with still worse treatment about a century ago. Those republicans, who, notwithstanding the ascendancy they had taken over the Asiatic seas, had been excluded from China by the intrigues of the Portuguese, at last got access to their ports. Not content with the precarious footing they had got there, they attempted to erect a fort near Hoaung-pon, under pretence of building a ware-house. It is said their scheme was, to make themselves masters of the navigation of the Tigris, and to lord it alike over the Chinese and foreigners who wanted to trade to Canton. The former saw through their project sooner than was consistent with their interest. They were all massacred; and it was a great while before that nation durst appear upon the coasts of China. They were seen there again about the year 1730. The first ships that landed there came from Java. They brought various commodities of the growth of India in general, and of their own colonies in particular, and bartered them for those of the country. The managers, wholly intent upon pleasing the council of Batavia, from whom they immediately received their orders, and from whom they expected their promotion, thought of nothing but disposing of the goods to the best advantage, without minding what they took in return. The Company soon found, that, at this rate, their sales could never stand in competition with those of their rivals. This consideration determined them to send ships directly from Europe with money. They touch at Batavia, where they take in such commodities of the country as are fit for China, and return directly into our latitudes, with much better ladings than formerly, but not so good as those of the English.

Of all the nations that have traded to China, the Dutch have been the most constant. They had a factory in the island of Chufan, at the time when business was chiefly transacted at Emouy. When it was removed to Canton, this factory still continued as before. As their Company were required to export woollen drapery, they determined to keep agents constantly at this place to dispose of it. This practice, joined to the demand for tea in the English settlements, threw almost all the trade between China and Europe into their bands, towards the end of the last century. The enormous duties the government laid on this article of trade, at last opened the eyes of other nations and particularly of France.

The French monarchy had formed a company for that trade in 1660. A rich merchant of Rouen, named Fermanel, was at the head of the undertaking. He had computed that it could not be carried on to advantage under a capital of 220,000 livres *, and the subscriptions amounted only to 140,000 †, which occasioned the ill success of the voyage. The losses they sustained disgusted them more than ever against a nation that hated foreigners, and imagined that they came to corrupt their morals, and encroach upon their liberty. In vain did the Chinese, about the year 1685, alter their opinion, and consequently their behaviour. The French seldom frequent their ports. The new society, formed in 1698, was not more active than the former, and they did not succeed in this trade, till it came to be united with that of the Indies ‡.

The

* 9,625 l.

† 6,125 l.

‡ The Company had it long under consideration, whether they should send draperies to China, where, from some trials that had been made, they were led to think they would sell to good account. They divided in opinion about this matter. At last, it was determined that France, not having a consumption within herself for the fifteenth part of the teas which were imported, could not be certain of selling them to advantage, however much superior they might be to those of other nations, because they were all paid for in cash. The present direction, therefore, have adopted the plan of the English: they have sent thither woollen stuff, and left them, as that nation do, with agents settled at Canton, to sell and to purchase goods all

The Danes and the Swedes began to frequent the ports of China about the same time, and acted upon the same principle. The Embden company would probably have adopted it likewise, if it had subsisted long enough.

Sums laid out in purchases by the Europeans, in China.

THE annual purchases the Europeans make in China, if we compute them by those of the year 1766, amount to 26,754,494 livres*; this sum, above four-fifths of which is laid out on the single article of tea, has been paid in piafres or in goods, brought by twenty-three ships. Sweden has furnished 1,935,168 livres † in money, and 427,500 ‡ in pewter, lead, and other commodities. Denmark, 2,161,630 livres § in money, and 231,000 || in iron, lead, and gun-flints. France, 4,000,000** in money, and 400,000, + in drapery goods. Holland, 2,735,400 †† in money, and 44,600 †† in woollen goods, besides 4,000,150 §§ in the produce of her colonies. Great Britain, 5,443,566 livres |||| in money, 2,000,475 * in woolen drapery, and 3,375,000++ in various articles brought from different parts of the Indies. All these sums together make a sum total of 26,754,494 livres ***. We do not include, in this calculation, ten millions +++ in specie which the English have carried over and above what we have mentioned, because they were destined to pay off the debts that nation had contracted, or to lay in a stock to trade upon in the intervals between the voyages +++.

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the year round. The event will inform us which is the best method for the interest of individuals. That which has been taken is certainly the best for the nation.

* 1,170,509 l. 2 s. 3 d. † 84,663 l. 12 s. † 18,703 l. 2 s. 6 d.
 § 94,571 l. 6 s. 3 d. || 10,106 l. 5 s. ** 175,000 l.
 + 17,500 l. †† 119,673 l. 15 s. †† 1,951 l. 5 s.
 §§ 175,006 l. 11 s. 3 d. ||| 238,156 l. 0 s. 3 d.
 * 875,020 l. 15 s. 7 d. ++ 147,656 l. 5 s.
 *** 1,170,509 l. 2 s. 3 d. +++ 437,500 l.

|||| The French Company have given out, upon the faith of their

Conjectures concerning the future state of the trade of Europe in China.

It is not easy to conjecture what will become of this trade. Though the Chinese are so fond of money, they seem more inclined to shut their ports against the Europeans, than to encourage them to enlarge their trade. As the spirit of the Tartars has subsided, and the conquerors have adopted the maxims of the vanquished

nation, they have imbibed their prejudices, and particularly their aversion from, and contempt of foreigners. They have discovered these dispositions, by the humiliating hardships they have imposed upon them, after having treated them with so much respect. The transition is but short from this precarious situation to a total expulsion. It may not be far off. And this is the more likely, as there is an active nation who very possibly is secretly contriving to bring it about.

The Dutch are not ignorant that all Europe is grown fond of several Chinese productions. They must suppose that the impossibility of procuring them from the first hand would not prevent the consumption of them. If we were all excluded from China, the natives would export their own commodities. As their shipping is not fit for a long navigation, they would be under the necessity of carrying them to Java or to the Philippines; and then we must buy them of one of the two nations to whom those colonies belong. The competition of the Spaniards is so insignificant, that the Dutch might be very

their books, that they have gained constantly 122 *per cent.* by their trade. Supposing, therefore, what no body will be inclined to doubt, that other companies have conducted their affairs as successfully, we may see to what pitch their sales must arise. This immense profit is not used as a pretence, as in the rest of India, for the building of forts, the pay of the garrisons that defend them, or the wars they bring on. The Europeans have not a settlement in China; they are received only as traders; and their expeditions are burdened with nothing but the freight unavoidable in a long voyage, directed by a body of men that are destitute of honesty, and almost always of economy.

very certain of engrossing the whole trade. It is dreadful to suspect those republicans of any thing so base; but it is well known they have been guilty of greater villainies for smaller profits.

If the ports of China were once shut, in all probability they would be so for ever. The obstinacy of that nation would never suffer them to retract; and there is no appearance that they could be compelled to it. What could be done against a nation at the distance of eight thousand leagues? No government is so destitute of common sense as to imagine, that our men, after the fatigues of so long a voyage, would venture to attempt conquests in a country defended by innumerable people, though we should suppose them ever so cowardly, as they have never yet tried their strength against the Europeans. All the mischief we could do them, would be the intercepting of their navigation, which is the least of their concerns, and neither affects their subsistence nor their conveniences.

This fruitless revenge would even be practicable only for a very short time. The ships employed in this piratical cruize would be driven from those latitudes one part of the year by the monsoons, and the other part by the storms they call typhones, which are peculiar to the seas of China *.

* When the weather is calm and serene, a thick cloud, very black, is perceived forming itself towards the north, near the horizon, reddish in the middle bright in the upper part, and pale and white towards the extremities. It sometimes rises for twelve hours together before it breaks. At last it bursts with a great noise, and from it issues a boisterous wind, accompanied with lightning, thunder, and a torrent of rain. It blows about two hours towardsthe north, and with the greatest violence. When it begins to fall, the rain ceases, and the tempest abates for an hour or two. Soon after, another whirlwind is perceived returning from the south-west, which blows for as long a time, and with as great violence as the former. These dreadful tempests are seldom dangerous above once or twice in that part of the Indian ocean that is subject to their attacks; though it often happens, that the ships that are exposed to them become their prey.

Having thus explained the manner in which the Europeans have hitherto carried on the East India trade, it will not be improper to examine three questions which naturally arise upon the subject, and have not yet been decided. 1. Whether it is adviseable to continue that trade? 2. Whether great settlements are necessary to carry it on with success? 3. Whether it ought to be left in the hands of charter companies? We shall discuss these points with the impartiality of a man, who has no other concern in the cause but the interest of mankind.

WHOMEVER considers Europe as making but one body, whose members are united in one common interest, or at least in the same kind of interest, will not hesitate to pronounce whether her connections with Asia are advantageous or not. The India trade evidently enlarges the circle of our enjoyments. It procures us wholesome and agreeable liquors, conveniences of a more refined nature, more splendid furniture, some new pleasures, and a more comfortable existence. Such powerful incentives have had the same influence upon those nations, who, from their situation, their activity, their good fortune in making discoveries, and the boldness of their enterprizes, are able to fetch those delights from their very source; as upon those who are unable to procure them, but through the channel of the maritime states, whose navigation disperses their superfluities all over the continent. The passion of the Europeans for those foreign luxuries has been so strong, that neither the highest duties, nor the strictest prohibitions, nor the severest penalties, have been able to cheek it. Every government, after having in vain tried to controul this inclination, which only grew stronger by opposition, has been forced at last to yield to it, though their prejudices, which were strengthened by time and custom, made them consider this compliance as detrimental to the stability, and to the general welfare of nations.

*Whether
Europe
should con-
tinue its
trade with
India.*

But the time was come, when it became necessary to put an end to this tyranny. Can any one doubt, whether

ther it is beneficial to add the enjoyments of foreign climates to those of our own? Universal society exists as well for the common interest of the whole, as by the mutual interest of all the individuals that compose it. A general intercourse must therefore occasion an increase of felicity. Commerce is the exercise of that valuable liberty to which nature has entitled all men, and is the source of their happiness, and indeed of their virtues. Men are never so truly free as in trade; nor is any thing so conducive to freedom as commercial laws: and one particular advantage derived from it is, that trade produces liberty, and also contributes to preserve it.

We must be but little acquainted with man, if we imagine that, in order to make him happy, he must be debarred from enjoyments. We grant, that the being accustomed to want the conveniences of life, lessens the sum of our misfortunes; but by retrenching more on our pleasures than on our sorrows, we are rather brought to a state of insensibility than of happiness. If man has received from nature a heart too susceptible of tender impressions; if his imagination is ever employed in search of objects to gratify his restless and involuntary desires; he should be left at full liberty to pursue the wide circle of enjoyments. Let reason teach him to be satisfied with such things as he can enjoy, and not to grieve for those that are out of his reach; this is true wisdom. But to require that reason should make us voluntarily reject, what it is in our power to add to our present enjoyments, is to contradict nature, and to subvert the first principles of sociability.

How should we persuade man to be content with the scanty pittance that moralists think proper to allow him? How shall we ascertain the limits of what is necessary, which varies according to his situation in life, his attainments, and his desires? no sooner had his industry made the means of procuring a subsistence more easy, but he employed his time in extending the limits of his faculties, and the circle of his enjoyments. Hence sprang all his factitious wants. The discovery of a new species of sensations excited a desire of preserving them, and a curiosity to find out others. The perfection of one art introduced the knowledge of several others.

The

The success of a war, occasioned by hunger or revenge, suggested the notion of conquest. Navigation put men under a necessity of destroying one another, or of uniting together. It was the same with commercial treaties between nations parted by the seas, as with social compacts between men scattered upon the same continent. All those connections began by combat, and ended by associations. War and navigation had intermingled societies and colonies. Hence men came to be bound together by dependence or intercourse. The refuse of all nations mixing together during the outrages of war, are refined and polished by commerce. The intention of commerce is, that all nations should consider themselves as one great society, whose members have all an equal right to partake of the conveniences of the rest. The object and the means of commerce equally suppose a desire and a freedom, agreed upon by all nations, to make all exchanges that may be suitable to both. The desire and the liberty of enjoyment are the only two springs of industry, and the only two principles of sociability among men.

Those who blame the trade of Europe with India have only the following reasons to alledge against a universal and free intercourse: That it is attended with a considerable loss of men; that it checks the progress of our industry; and that it lessens our stock of money. These objections are easily obviated.

As long as every man has the liberty of chusing a profession, and of making what use he pleases of his faculties, we need not be anxious about his fate. As, in a state of freedom, every thing has its proper value, no man will expose himself to any danger, without expecting a proportional equivalent. In a well-regulated society, every individual is at liberty to do what best suits his inclination and his interest, provided it does not affect the properties and liberties of others. A law that should prohibit every trade in which a man might endanger his life, would condemn a great part of mankind to starve, and would deprive society of numberless comforts. We need not pass the Line to carry on a dangerous trade; and, without going out of Europe, we may find many professions that are far more destructive to the

human race, than the navigation to India. If the dangers of the sea carry off some of our men, let us give due encouragement to the culture of our lands, and our population will be so much increased, that we shall be better able to spare those self-devoted victims that are swallowed up by the sea. To this we may add, that most of those who perish in long voyages, are lost by accidental causes, which might easily be prevented by wholesomer diet, and a more regular life. But if men will add, to the vices of their own climate and manners, the destructive ones of the climates where they land, it is no wonder if their bodies be unable to resist these united principles of destruction.

Even supposing that the India trade should cost Europe as many men as it is said to do, are we very sure that this loss is not made up by the labours to which it gives rise, and which cherish and increase our population? The men who go abroad certainly leave their places vacant upon land, to be filled up by others yet unborn. Whoever casts an attentive eye on the multitude of inhabitants that cover the confined territory of maritime nations, will be convinced that it is not the navigation to Asia, nor even navigation in general, that is detrimental to the population of Europe; and that, on the contrary, it alone may, perhaps, be said to balance all the causes of decay of the human race. Let us now endeavour to invalidate the opinion of those, who apprehend the India trade interferes with our industry at home.

Admitting it to be true, that it had put a stop to some of our labours, it has given rise to many more. It has introduced into our colonies the culture of sugar, coffee, and indigo. Many of our manufactures are kept up by India silk and cotton. If Saxony and other countries in Europe make very fine china; if Valencia weaves Pekins, superior even to those of China; if Switzerland imitates the muslins and worked callicoes of Bengal; if England and France print linens with great elegance; if so many stuffs, formerly unknown in our climates, now employ our best artists, are we not indebted to India for all these advantages?

Let us proceed further, and put the case, that we are not beholden to Asia for any of our improvements, the con-
sump-

consumption we make of their commodities cannot be prejudicial to our industry; for we pay for them with the produce of our own manufactures exported to America. I sell a hundred livres * worth of linen to a Spaniard, and send that money to the East Indies. Another sends the same quantity of the linen itself. We both bring home tea. In the main, we are both doing the same thing; we are changing a hundred livres † worth of linen into tea: the only difference is, that the one does it by a double, and the other by a single process. Suppose the Spaniard, in place of money, had given me goods that were saleable in India, I should not have injured our artificers by carrying them thither. Is it not the very same as if I had carried our own produce thither? I sail from Europe with national manufactures; I go to the South Sea, and exchange them for piafres: I carry those piafres to the Indies; I bring home things that are either useful or pleasing. Have I confined the industry of my country? Far from it: I have extended the consumption of its produce, and multiplied the enjoyments of my countrymen. But what misleads the opposers of the India trade, is, that the piafres are brought over to Europe before they are carried to Asia. The last point to be considered is, that whether the money is, or is not employed as the intermediate mark of exchange, I have either directly or indirectly made an exchange with Asia, and bartered goods for goods, my industry for their industry, my produce for their produce.

But some discontented men have objected, that India has at all times swallowed up all the treasures of the universe. Ever since chance has taught men the use of metals, say these censurers, they have never ceased to search for them. Pale and restless avarice has taken her stand among the barren rocks, where nature had wisely concealed those infidious treasures. Since they were dug out of the bowels of the earth, they have constantly been spreading over its surface; from whence, notwithstanding the extreme opulence of the Romans, and of some other nations, they have disappeared from Europe, Africa, and some parts of Asia. India hath swept them all.

T 2

away.

* bout 4l. 7s. 6d.

† About 4l. 7s. 6d.

away. Money still goes the same way ; it flows incessantly from west to east, and there it fixes, and never finds its way back again. It is for India, then, that the mines of Peru have been opened, and it is for its inhabitants that the Europeans have been guilty of so many crimes in America. Whilst the Spaniards are draining the blood of their slaves in Mexico to dig silver out of the bowels of the earth, the Baniāns take still more pains to bury it again. If ever the wealth of Potosi should be exhausted, we must go and look for it on the coast of Malabar, where we have sent it. When we have drained India of pearls and perfumes, we shall, perhaps, go sword in hand, and recover the money it hath cost us. So shall our cruelties and caprices remove the gold and silver into other climes, where avarice and superstition will again bury them under ground.

These complaints are not altogether groundless. Ever since the other parts of the world have opened a communication with India, they have constantly exchanged gold and silver for arts and commodities. Nature has lavished upon the Indians the little they want ; their climate will not admit of our luxuries, and their religion gives them an abhorrence from some things that we feed upon. As their customs, manners, and government, have continued the same in the midst of the revolutions that have overturned their country, we must not expect they should ever alter. India ever was, and ever will be what it now is. As long as any trade is carried on there, money will be brought in, and goods sent out. But, before we exclaim against the abuse of this trade, we should follow its gradual progress, and see what is the result.

First, It is certain our gold does not go to India. They have gold of their own ; besides a constant supply from Monomotapa, which comes by the eastern coast of Africa and by the Red Sea ; from the Turks, which is brought by way of Arabia and Bassora ; and from Persia, which comes both by the ocean and the continent. This enormous mass is never increased by the gold we fetch from the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. In short, we are so far from carrying gold to Asia, that, for a long while, we carried silver to China to barter it for gold.

Even

Even the silver they get from us is by no means so considerable as may be imagined, from the immense quantity of India goods we bring home. Their annual sale has of late years amounted to a hundred and fifty millions *. Supposing they had cost but half of what they sold for, seventy-five millions † must have been sent to India to purchase them, besides what must have been sent over for our settlements. We shall not scruple to affirm, that for some time past, all Europe put together has not carried thither more than twenty-four millions ‡ a-year. Eight millions || are sent from France, six millions § from Holland, three millions ¶ from England, three millions † from Denmark, two millions ‡‡ from Sweden, and two millions ‡‡ from Portugal.

This calculation will not appear improbable, if we consider, that though, in general, India is in no want either of our produce or of our manufactures, yet they receive it from us, in iron, lead, copper, woollen goods, and other lesser articles, to the full amount of one-fifth of the commodities with which they furnish us.

This method of payment receives an accession from the produce of the European settlements in Asia. The most considerable by far are those of the spice islands for the Dutch, and of Bengal for the English.

The fortunes made by the free traders and agents in India, must likewise be deducted from the exportation of our money. Those industrious men deposit their stock in the coffers of their own, or some other nation, to be repaid them in Europe, whether they all return sooner or later. So that a part of the India trade is carried on with money got in the country.

Some events happen too from time to time, that bring the treasures of the east into our hands. It is undeniable, that by the revolutions in the Decan and Bengal, and by disposing of thrones at pleasure, the French and the English have got possession of the wealth accumulated for so many ages. It is evident that those sums,

* 6,562,500L

|| 350,000L

† 131,250L

† 3,281,250L

§ 262,500L

‡ 87,500L

‡ 1,050,000L

¶ 131,250L

|| 87,500L

joined to others less considerable, which the Europeans have acquired by their courage and address, must have kept a great deal of money at home, which would otherwise have gone to Asia.

That rich part of the world has even restored to some of the treasure we had poured into it. Every body has heard of Kouli-kan's expedition to India; but every body does not know that he brought away upward of 2,000,000,000 * in specie, or in valuable effects. The emperor's palace alone contained inestimable and innumerable treasures. The presence chamber was lined with plate gold; the ceiling glittered with diamonds. Twelve pillars of maffy gold, adorned with pearls and precious stones, made three sides of the throne. The canopy represented a peacock, with his wings extended to overshadow the monarch. The diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and all the sparkling gems that composed that curious piece of workmanship, exactly represented the colours of that beautiful bird. No doubt part of that wealth is gone back to India. Much of the treasure brought to Persia at the conquest of the Mogul, must have been buried under ground during the subsequent wars; but the several branches of commerce must certainly have brought some to Europe through such well-known channels that it is needless to specify them.

Admitting that none of these riches have reached us, the arguments of those who condemn the trade of India, because it is carried on with coin, will not be strengthened. Money is not produced in our fields; it is the produce of America, which is sent us in exchange for our own. If Europe did not send it to Asia, America would soon be unable to send any more to Europe. The too great plenty of it on our continent would so reduce its value, that the nations who bring it to us could no longer get it from their colonies. When once an ell of linen cloth, which is now worth twenty sols + rises to a pistole £, the Spaniards cannot buy it of us, to carry it to the country where silver grows. It costs them money to work the mines. When this expence shall have increased to ten times that sum, and

* 87,500,000l. + 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. £ 16s. 9d.

and the price of silver is still the same, the business of working in the mines will be more expensive than profitable to the owners, who of course will drop it. No more gold and silver will come from the new world to the old, and the Americans will be forced to forsake their richest mines, as they have gradually done the poor ones. This event would have taken place before now, if they had not found a way of disposing of about 3,000,000,000 * in Asia, by the Cape of Good Hope, or by the Philippines. Therefore this profusion of money poured into India, which so many prejudiced persons have hitherto considered as a ruinous exportation, has been beneficial both to Spain, by supporting the only manufacture she can boast of, and to other nations, who without it could never have disposed of their produce, or of the fruits of their industry. Having thus justified the India trade, we shall next proceed to inquire whether it has been conducted upon the principles of sound policy.

ALL the nations in Europe who have doubled the Cape of Good Hope, have aimed at founding great empires in Asia. The Portuguese, who led the way to those wealthy regions, first set us the example of a boundless ambition. Not content with having made themselves masters of the islands in which the choicest productions were to be found, and erected fortresses wherever they were wanted, to secure to themselves the navigation of the east, they also aspired to the authority of giving laws to Malabar, which, being divided into several petty sovereignties, that were jealous of, or at enmity with each other, was forced to submit to the yoke.

Whether it is necessary, that the Europeans should have large establishments in India, in order to carry on trade.

The Spaniards did not at first shew more moderation. Even before they had completed the conquest of the Philippines, which should have been the centre of their power, they strove to extend their dominion farther. If they have not since subdued the rest of that immense archipelago,

* 131,250,000 L.

Clipelago, or filled all the adjacent countries with their enormities, we must search for the cause of their inaction in the treasures of America, which confined their pursuits, though they did not satisfy their desires.

The Dutch robbed the Portuguese of their best posts on the continent, and drove them out of the spice islands. They have kept those possessions, and some later acquisitions, only by establishing a form of government less faulty than that of the nations on whose ruins they were rising.

The steps taken by the French were so slow and irresolute, that it was long before they could form or execute any great projects. As soon as they found themselves sufficiently powerful, they availed themselves of the subversion of the Mogul authority, to usurp the dominion of Coromandel. By artful negotiations, they conquered or obtained a more extensive territory than any European power had ever possessed in Indostan.

The English, more prudent, did not attempt to aggrandize themselves, till they had stripped the French of their acquisitions, and till no rival nation could contend with them. The certainty of having none but the natives to deal with, determined them to carry their arms against Bengal. It was the province of all India which afforded most commodities fit for the markets of Asia and Europe, and was likely to consume most of their manufactures; and also, that which their flag could best protect, having the advantage of a great river. They have conquered, and they flatter themselves they shall long enjoy the fruits of their victory.

Their successes, and those of the French, have astonished all nations. It is easy to conceive how solitary and defenceless islands, that have no connection with their neighbours, may have been subdued. But it is astonishing, that five or six hundred Europeans should, in our days, have beaten innumerable armies of Gentiles and Mahometans, mostly skilled in the art of war. These strange scenes, however, ought not to appear surprising, after what has already been exhibited.

The Portuguese had scarcely begun to appear in the east, when a few ships and a few soldiers subverted whole kingdoms. A small number of factories, and of forts,

were

were sufficient to crush the power of India. When they ceased to be oppressed by their first conquerors, they were enslaved by those who expelled and succeeded them. The history of those delightful regions was no longer the history of the natives, but that of their tyrants. But what strange people must these have been, who never could learn wisdom in the school of adversity and experience; who tamely surrendered to their common enemy; who were continually defeated, and yet never knew how to repulse a few adventurers, thrown, by accident, as it were, upon their coasts? They were so constantly the dupes and the victims of those who attacked them, that one would almost be tempted to think they were not of the same species. The causes of this unaccountable pusillanimity shall be the subject of our next inquiry; and we shall begin with despotism.

All nations must necessarily lose their virtue, their courage, and their love of independence, in proportion as they depart from the original state of nature; and it is reasonable to believe, that the southern nations of Asia, having been first collected into societies, must have been first exposed to despotism. Such has been the progress of all associations from the beginning of the world. Another truth equally evident from history is, that all arbitrary power hastens its own destruction, and that revolutions will restore liberty sooner or later, as they are more or less rapid. There are few countries, except Hindostan, that have not some time or other recovered their rights, after they had lost them. Tyrants have fallen a hundred times; but tyranny has always stood its ground.

Civil slavery has been the consequence of political slavery. The Indian is not master of his own life; he knows of no law that will protect it from the caprice of the tyrant, or the fury of his agents. He is not master of his own understanding; he is debarred from all studies that are beneficial to mankind, and only allowed such as tend to enslave him. He is not master of his own field: the lands and their produce belong to the sovereign; and it is well if the labourer can earn enough to subsist himself and family. He is not master of his own industry: every artist who has had the misfortune to discover some abilities, is in danger of being doomed to serve the monarch,

narch, his lieutenants, or some rich man who has purchased a right to employ him as he pleases. He is not master of his own wealth: to secure it from the rapacious hand of power, he buries it under ground, and leaves it there at his death, foolishly imagining it will be of service to him in the next world. No doubt, this absolute, arbitrary, and tyrannical authority, with which the Indian is encompassed on all sides, must subdue his spirit, and render him incapable of those generous exertions that courage requires.

The climate of Indostan is another impediment to noble sentiments. The sloth it inspires is an invincible obstacle to great revolutions, and vigorous oppositions, so common in the northern regions. The body and the mind, equally enervated, retain only the virtues and vices of slavery. In the second, or at farthest in the third generation, the Tartars, the Turks, the Persians, and even the Europeans, contract the same listlessness with the Indians. These natural influences might certainly be conquered by religious or moral institutions; but the superstitions of the country are strangers to such exalted views. They never promise future rewards to the generous patriot who falls in his country's cause. Whilst they advise, and sometimes command suicide, by the allurement of future delights, they strictly forbid the shedding of blood.

This was a necessary consequence of the doctrine of transmigration, which must inspire its followers with constant and universal benevolence. They are in continual fear of hurting their neighbour, that is, all men, and all animals. How can a man be a soldier, when he can say, Perhaps, the elephant or the horse I am about to kill, may contain my father's soul; perhaps, the enemy I am going to slay, was formerly the head of my family? Thus, in the Indies, religion excites cowardice, the offspring of despotism and of the climate: the manners of the people contribute still more to increase it.

In every country, the passion of love is the ruling passion; but it is not pursued with the same eagerness in every climate. The northern nations indulge it with decency and moderation; whereas the southern ones give

give themselves up to it with an unbounded licentiousness. The policy of princes has sometimes turned this propensity to the advantage of society; but the lawgivers of the Indies seem to have had nothing in view, but to increase the fatal influences of their ardent climate. The Moguls, the last conquerors of those regions, have proceeded still farther. Love is to them only a shameful and destructive debauchery, consecrated by religion, by the laws, and by government. The military conduct of the nations of Indostan, whether Pagans or Mohammedans, corresponds with their dissolute manners. We shall mention some particulars, taken from the writings of an English officer, remarkable for his military exploits in those parts.

The soldiers make up the smallest part of the Indian camps. Every trooper is attended by his wife, his children, and two servants, one to look after his horse, and the other to forage. The equipage of the officers and generals is proportionable to their vanity, their fortune, and their rank. The sovereign himself, when he takes the field, more intent upon making a parade of his magnificence, than upon the necessities of war, carries along with him his seraglio, his elephants, his court, and almost all the inhabitants of his capital. The necessity of providing for the wants, the fancies, and the luxury of this strange multitude, must naturally form a kind of town in the midst of the army, or a magazine of unnecessary articles. The motions of such an unwieldy mass must necessarily be very slow. Their marches, and all their operations, are attended with great confusion. However abstemious the Indians, and even the Moguls may be, they must often experience a want of provisions; which brings on contagious distempers, and a dreadful mortality.

These distempers, however, seldom carry off any but recruits. Though, in general, the inhabitants of Indostan affect a great passion for military glory, they are not fond of the profession. Those who have been so successful in battle as to obtain honourable titles, are excused from serving for some time; and there are few that do not avail themselves of this privilege. The retreat of these veterans reduces the army to a despicable affembage

blage of soldiers, levied in haste through the several provinces of the empire, and utterly unacquainted with discipline.

The manner in which these troops live corresponds to so faulty a constitution. At night they eat a very great quantity of rice, and, after supper, they take some drugs that lay them fast asleep. Notwithstanding this bad habit, they place no guard round their camp to prevent their being surprized; nor can any thing prevail upon a soldier to rise early, tho' the greatest dispatch should be necessary for the execution of their designs.

The birds of prey, with which they are always plentifully provided, regulate their operations. If they find them heavy or benumbed, it is a bad omen, and prevents their marching out to battle: if they are fierce and angry, they prepare for battle, whatever reasons there may be for declining an engagement. This superstition, together with the superstitious observance of lucky and unlucky days, decides the fate of the best concerted projects.

They observe no order in their marches. Every soldier proceeds as he pleases, and follows only the bulk of the corps he belongs to. He is frequently seen carrying his provisions upon his head, together with the utensils for dressing them; whilst his arms are carried by his wife, who is commonly followed by several children. If a foot soldier has any relations or business in the enemy's army, he will quietly go there, and return to join his colours, without meeting with the least molestation.

The action is no better conducted than the preparations for it. The cavalry, in which consists the whole strength of an Indian army, as the infantry are held in great contempt, fight tolerably with the sword and spear, but can never stand the fire of cannon or musquetry. They are afraid of losing their horses, which are mostly Arabian, Persian, or Tartarian, and are their whole fortune. Those who belong to this corps are respected and well paid, and have so great an attachment to their horses, that sometimes they go into mourning for them.

The Indians dread the enemy's artillery, as much as they confide in their own, though they neither know how

how to bring it along, nor how to make use of it. Their great guns, which are called by pompous names, are mostly of a prodigious size, and rather prevent than assist the gaining of a victory.

Those who are ambitious of distinguishing themselves, intoxicate themselves with opium, imagining that it warms the blood, and qualifies them for heroic actions. In this state of intoxication, their dress and impotent rage make them bear a greater resemblance to fanatical women than to men of courage.

The prince who commands these despicable troops always rides on an elephant richly caparisoned, where he has at once the general and the standard of the whole army, whose eyes are fixed upon him. If he flies, he is slain ; the whole machine is destroyed ; the several corps disperse, or go over to the enemy.

This description, which might have been heightened without exaggeration, confirms the probability of our successes in Indostan. Many Europeans themselves, judging of what might be done in the inland parts, by what has been performed along the coasts, imagine that we might, without rashness, undertake the conquest of the whole country. The circumstance that makes them so confident, is, that in places where no enemy could harass them in the rear, nor intercept the expected succours, they have overcome timorous weavers and merchants, undisciplined and cowardly armies, weak princes jealous of each other, and always at war with their neighbours, or their own subjects. They do not consider, that, if they were to penetrate into the interior parts, they would all perish before they had got half way. They would be spent with the excessive heat of the climate, continual fatigue, numberless diseases, want of provisions, and a thousand other causes of inevitable death, even though no troops should harass them.

We will suppose, however, that ten thousand European soldiers had actually over-run and ravaged India from one end to the other : What would be the result ? Would these forces be sufficient to secure the conquest, to keep every nation, every province, every district in subjection ? And if this number be not sufficient, let it

be calculated what number of troops would be necessary for this purpose.

Let us suppose that the government was firmly established: this would scarcely add any advantage to the situation of the conquerors. The revenues of Indostan will be spent in Indostan itself. The European power that has conceived this project of usurpation, would have nothing left, but a large vacant and depopulated space, and the disgrace of having pursued chimerical ideas.

This, indeed, is now an useless question, since the Europeans themselves have made their success in Indostan more difficult than ever. By associating the natives to their mutual jealousies, they have taught them the art of war, and trained them up to arms and discipline. This impolitic conduct has opened the eyes of the sovereigns of those countries, whose ambition has been excited to establish regular troops. Their cavalry moves in better order; and their infantry, which was formerly so despicable, has now acquired the firmness of our battalions. A numerous and well-ordered artillery has defended their camps, and protected their attacks. Their armies, better composed, and better paid, have been able to keep the field longer.

This change, which might have been foreseen, had we not been blinded by temporary interest, may in time become so considerable, as wholly to prevent our attempting any farther conquests in Indostan; and it is possible we may lose those we have already made. Whether this will be a misfortune or an advantage, is what we shall next take into consideration.

When the Europeans first began to trade in that wealthy region, they found it divided into a great many small states, some of which were governed by princes of their own nation, and others by Patan Kings. Their mutual hatred occasioned almost perpetual wars. Besides the wars between province and province, there was a perpetual one between every sovereign and his subjects. It was fomented by the tax-gatherers, who, to ingratiate themselves at court, always levied heavier taxes than had been laid on the people. These barbarians aggravated this heavy burthen, by distressing and vexing the inhabitants.

tants. Their extortions were a means of keeping their places, in a country where he is always in the right who has most to give.

From this anarchy and these violences, we judged that, to secure a safe and permanent commerce, we must put it under the protection of arms; and we accordingly fortified our factories. In process of time, jealousy, which divides the European nations in the Indies, as it does every where else, involved them in more considerable expences. Each of these foreign nations thought it necessary to augment their forces, lest they should be overpowered by their rivals.

Our dominion, however, extended no farther than our own fortresses. Goods were brought thither from the inland parts, peaceably enough, or at least without unsurmountable difficulties. Even after the conquests of Kouli-kan had plunged the north of Indostan into confusion, the coast of Coromandel enjoyed its former tranquillity. But the death of Nizam El-moulouck, Soubah of the Decan, kindled a flame which is not yet fully extinguished.

The disposal of those immense spoils naturally belonged to the court of Dehly; but the weakness of that court emboldened the children of Nizam to dispute concerning the possession of their father's treasure. To supplant each other, they had recourse alternately to arms, to treachery, to poison, and to assassinations. Most of the adventurers they engaged in their animosities and crimes, perished during these horrid transactions. The Marattas alone, a nation who sometimes took one side, and sometimes another, and often had troops in all parties, seemed to bid fair for reaping the benefit of this anarchy, and invading the sovereignty of the Decan. The Europeans have pretended, it was greatly their interest to oppose this deep, but secret design; and they alledge the following reasons in their defence:

The Marattas, say they, are thieves, both from education and from their political principles. They have no regard to the law of nations, no notion of natural or civil right, and carry desolation wherever they go. The most populous countries are turned into a desert, at the

very report of their approach. In the countries they have subdued, nothing is to be seen but confusion, and all manufactures are annihilated.

The Europeans, who were strongest on the coast of Coromandel, thought such neighbours would utterly ruin their trade, and that it would be impossible to send money by their couriers to buy goods in the inland countries, as they would certainly be robbed by this banditti. The desire of preventing this evil, which must ruin their fortunes, and rob them of the fruit of their settlements suggested to their agents the idea of a new system.

They gave out, that, in the present situation of Indostan, it was impossible to keep up useful connections without the protection of an army, and a military establishment: That, at so great a distance from the mother-country, the expence could not possibly be defrayed out of the mere profits of trade, were they ever so great: That therefore it was absolutely necessary to procure sufficient possessions to answer those enormous calls; and, consequently, that the possessions must not be small ones.

This argument, probably contrived by insatiable avarice and boundless ambition, and which the too common passion for conquest found to be a very weighty one, may, perhaps, be a mere sophism. A variety of physical, natural, moral, and political reasons may be urged in opposition to it. We shall only insist upon one, which is a matter of fact. From the Portuguese, who first attempted to aggrandize themselves in India, down to the English, who closed the fatal list of usurpers, not one acquisition, great or small, except Bengal and the spice islands, has ever paid the expence of taking and keeping it up. The larger the possessions, the more they have proved chargeable to the ambitious power that possessed them, by whatever means they were acquired.

This will always be the case. Every nation that has obtained a large territory will be desirous of keeping it. They will think there is no safety but in fortifications, and will multiply them without end. That war-like appearance will frighten away the husbandman and

the

the artist, who will not expect to live peaceably. The neighbouring princes will grow jealous, and will have reason to be afraid of falling a prey to a merchant turned conqueror. In consequence of this, they will be devising means to ruin an oppressor, whom they had admitted into their ports, with no other view than to increase their own treasures and power. If they enter into a treaty with him, they will sign it, swearing in their hearts the destruction of their new ally. Falshood will be the basis of all their agreements; and the longer they have been forced to dissemble, the more time they will have had to whet the dagger destined to stab their enemy.

The well-grounded fear of these perfidies will oblige the usurpers to be always upon their guard, and to maintain a force sufficient to repel their attempts. If they must be defended by Europeans, what a consumption of men for the mother-country! What an expence to raise them, to send them over, to maintain, and to recruit them! If, from a principle of economy, they content themselves with the Indian soldiery, what can they expect from a confused rabble, whose expeditions always degenerate into robbery, and habitually end in a shameful and precipitate flight? Their moral and natural sentiments are so loose, that even the defence of their gods, and their own households, could never inspire the boldest among them with any thing beyond a few transient fits of intrepidity. It is not probable, that foreign interests, ruinous to their country, should quicken their inactive and corrupt souls, or raise any degree of spirit in their debased minds: Is it not rather to be expected, that they will be ever ready to betray an odious cause, in which they find no immediate and lasting advantage?

To these inconveniences will be added a spirit of extortion and plunder, which, even in the times of the most profound peace, will fall little short of the devastations of war. The agents intrusted with those remote concerns will be inclined to make rapid fortunes. The slow and regular profits of trade will be thought beneath their notice, and they will hasten revolutions that will lay lacs of roupées at their feet. Their audaciousness will have done infinite mischief, before it can be controlled by au-

thority, at the distance of six thousand leagues. The reformers will have no power against millions, or they will come too late to prevent the fall of an edifice built on a sandy foundation.

This result makes it needless to inquire into the nature of the political engagements the Europeans have entered into with the powers of India. If these great acquisitions are hurtful, the treaties made to procure them cannot be rational. If merchants are wise, they will forego the rage of conquest, and the flattering hopes of holding the balance of Asia.

The court of Dehly will finally sink under the weight of intestine divisions, or fortune will raise up a prince capable of restoring it. The government will remain feudal, or once more become despotic. The empire will be devided into many independent states, or it will obey but one master. Either the Marattas or the Moguls will become a ruling power. But these revolutions are of no consequence to the Europeans. Whatever be the fate of Indostan, the Indians will go on weaving and printing, and we shall go on buying their calicoes : the rest is a point we are not concerned in.

It would be in vain to alledge, that the spirit which has always prevailed in those countries has forced us to depart from the common rules of trade ; that we are in arms upon the coasts ; that our situation unavoidably obliges us to interfere with the affairs of our neighbours ; and that, if we keep too much to ourselves, it is the ready way to be undone. These fears will appear groundless to sensible people, who know that a war in those distant regions must be still more fatal to the Europeans than to the natives ; and that there is a necessity of either subduing the whole, which is scarce possible, or of being for ever expelled from a country where it is our advantage to keep up a connection.

The love of order would even make it desirable to extend these pacific views ; and, far from thinking that great possessions are necessary, we do not despair of being able, in time, to do without fortified posts. The Indians are naturally gentle and humane, though crushed under the severe burden of despotism. The nations who

who traded with them of old always praised them for their candour and honesty. That part of the world is now in a state of confusion, equally alarming to them and to us. Our ambition has sowed discord every where, and our rapaciousness has inspired them with hatred, fear, and contempt for our continent: they look upon us as conquerors, usurpers, and oppressors, lavish of blood, and greedy of riches. This is the character we have acquired in the east. Our example has increased the number of their national vices, at the same time that we have taught them to be on their guard against ours.

If we had acted with the Indians upon honest principles; if we had shewn them, that mutual advantage is the basis of commerce; if we had encouraged their cultivation and manufactures, by exchanges alike advantageous to them and to us; we should insensibly have gained their hearts. If we had fortunately taken care to preserve their confidence in our dealings with them, we might have removed their prejudices, and, perhaps, changed their form of government. We should have succeeded so far as to have lived amongst them, and trained up civilized nations around us, who would have protected our settlements for our mutual interests. Every one of our establishments would have been to each nation in Europe as their native country, where they would have found a sure protection. Our situation in India is the consequence of our profligacy, and of the sanguinary systems we have introduced. The Indians imagine nothing is due to us, because all our actions have shewn that we did not think ourselves under any ties with respect to them.

This state of perpetual contention is irksome to most of the Asiatic nations, and they ardently wish for a change. The disorder of our affairs must have made us join in this wish. If we are all in the same dispositions, and if one common interest really inclines us to peace and harmony, the best way to attain this desirable end would perhaps be, that all the European nations who trade to India should agree among themselves to maintain a neutrality in those remote seas, which should never be interrupted by the disturbances that so frequently happen

happen on our own continent. If we could once consider ourselves as members of one great commonwealth, we should have no occasion for those forces which make us odious abroad, and ruin us at home. But as our present spirit of discord will not permit us to expect that such a change can soon take place, it remains only that we now consider, whether Europe ought still to carry on the India trade by charter companies, or to make it a free trade.

Whether Europe ought to lay open the trade to India, or carry it on by exclusive charters?

If this question were to be decided upon general principles, it would be easily answered. If we ask, Whether, in a state which allows any particular branch of trade, every citizen has a right to partake of it? the answer is so plain, as to leave no room for discussion. It would be unnatural, that subjects, who share alike the burden and public expences of civil society, should not be alike partakers of the benefits arising from the compact that unites them; they would have cause to complain, that they sustain all the inconveniences of the institution, and are deprived of the benefits they expected to receive from it.

On the other hand, political notions perfectly coincide with these ideas of justice. It is well known, that freedom is the very soul of commerce, and that nothing else can bring it to perfection. It is well known, that competition awakens industry, and gives it all the vigour it is capable of acquiring. Yet, for upwards of a century, the practice has constantly been contradictory to these principles.

All the nations of Europe, that trade to India, carry on that commerce by exclusive companies; and it must be confessed, that this practice is plausible, because it is hardly conceivable, that great and enlightened nations should have been under a mistake for above a hundred years on so important a point, and that neither experience nor argument should have undeceived them. We must conclude, therefore, that either the advocates for liberty have given too great a latitude to their principles, or the favourers of exclusive privilege have too strenuously affected

asserted the necessity of such limitations : possibly both parties, from too great an attachment to their respective opinions, have overshot the mark, and are equally distant from the truth.

Ever since this famous question has been debated, it has always been thought to be a very simple one : it has always been supposed, that an India Company must necessarily be exclusive, and that its existence was essentially connected with its privilege. Hence the advocates for freedom have asserted, that exclusive privileges were odious ; and, therefore, that there ought to be no Company. Their opponents have argued, on the contrary, that the nature of things required a Company ; and therefore, that there must be an exclusive charter. But if we can make it appear, that the reasons against charters prove nothing against Companies, and that the circumstances which make it necessary to have an India Company, do not supply any argument in favour of a charter : if we can demonstrate, that the nature of things requires, indeed, a powerful association, a Company for the India trade ; but that the exclusive charter is connected only with particular causes, insomuch that the Company may exist without the charter ; we shall then have traced the source of the common error, and found out the solution of the difficulty.

Let us enquire what constitutes the particular nature of commercial transactions. It is the climate, the produce, the distance of places, the form of government, the genius and manners of the people who live under it. In the India trade, we must go six thousand leagues off to fetch the commodities which those countries afford : we must arrive there at a certain season, and wait till another for the proper winds to return home. Therefore every voyage takes up about two years, and the owners must wait these two years for their returns. This is the first, and a very material circumstance.

The nature of a government, in which there is neither safety nor property, will not permit the people to keep any public markets, or to lay up any stores. Let us represent to ourselves men who are depressed and corrupted by despotism, workmen who are unable to undertake any thing by themselves : and on the other

hand, nature more fruitful in her gifts, than power is rapacious, supplying a slothful people with food sufficient for their wants and their desires ; and we shall wonder that any industry should be found in the Indies. And, indeed, we may safely say, that hardly any thing would be manufactured there, if we did not go and encourage the workmen with money in our hands, or if we did not take care to bespeak the goods we want, a year before hand. One third of the money is paid at the time of bespeaking the work, another when it is half done, and the rest on delivery of the goods. From this mode of payment results a wide difference, both in the price and in the quality of the goods ; but hence results likewise the necessity of always having a stock in hand ; so that it remains out a year the longer, that is, three years instead of two. This is an alarming circumstance for a private man, especially if we consider the largeness of the stock that is requisite for such undertakings.

As the charges of navigation and the risks are immense, they cannot be supported without bringing home complete cargoes, that is, cargoes of a million, or a million and a half of livres *, at prime cost in the Indies. Where shall we find merchants, or even men of fortune, who can afford to advance such a sum, to be reimbursed only at the end of three years ? Undoubtedly, there are very few in Europe ; and among those who might have the power, scarce any would have the will. If we consult experience, we shall find that men of moderate fortunes only are the persons who are inclined to run great risks, in order to make great profits. But when once a man is possessed of an ample fortune, he is inclined to enjoy it, and enjoy it with safety. Not that riches can quench the thirst after them ; on the contrary, they are often the occasion of it ; but, at the same time, they furnish a thousand means of gratification, without either trouble or danger. This opens to our view the necessity of entering into associations, where a number of men will not scruple to be concerned, because every individual will venture but a small part of his fortune, and will rate the measure of his profits upon the

united

* About £4,700*l.* on an average.

united stock of the whole society. This necessity will appear still more evident, if we consider how the business of buying and selling is managed in India, and what precautions it requires.

To contract beforehand for a cargo, above fifty different agents must be employed, who are dispersed in different parts, at the distance of three, four, or five hundred leagues from each other. When the work is done, it must be examined and measured, otherwise the goods would soon be found faulty, from the dishonesty of the workmen; a vice they are but too much addicted to, from the nature of their government, and from the influence of those various crimes of which the Europeans have set them the example for these three centuries past.

After all these details, there are still other operations remaining, not less necessary. They must employ whitsters, men to beat the linens, packers, and even bleaching grounds, with pools of water fit for the purpose. It would certainly be very difficult for individuals to attend and to observe all these precautions: But supposing, that, by dint of industry, there was a possibility of effecting it, it could not be carried on any longer than each of them could keep up a continued trade, and regularly ship off fresh cargoes. All these particulars are not to be executed in a short time, and not without established connections. Every private man, therefore, should be able to fit out a ship annually during three years, that is, to disburse four millions of livres*. It is evident that this is impossible; and that such an undertaking is only to be compassed by a society.

But, perhaps, some houses may be established in India, to carry through the preparatory business, and to keep cargoes in readiness for the ships that are to be sent off to Europe.

This establishment of trading houses, at six thousand leagues from the mother-country, with the immense stock that would be requisite to pay the weavers beforehand, seems to be a visionary scheme, inconsistent with reason and experience. Can it be seriously imagined, that any merchants, who have already acquired a fortune in Europe, will transmit it to Asia to purchase a stock

of

of muslins, in expectation of ships that, perhaps, may never arrive; or, if they should, may be but few in number, or may not be able to purchase? On the contrary, we see that every European, who has made a small fortune in India, is intent upon returning home; and, instead of trying to increase it by the easy means that private trade offers in those parts, as well as the service of the companies, they all wish to come and enjoy it quietly at home.

If more proofs and instances were wanting, we need but attend to what passes in America. If we could suppose, that commerce, and the hopes of the profits arising from it, were capable of alluring rich Europeans to quit their native country, it would certainly be to go and settle in that part of the world, which is much nearer than Asia, and where they would find the laws and manners of Europe. It might naturally be supposed, that the merchants should buy up the sugars before-hand of the planters, and keep them in readiness to be delivered to the European ships as soon as they arrive, on receiving other commodities in exchange, which they would afterwards sell to the planters when they wanted them. But it is quite the contrary. The merchants settled in America are no more than commissaries or factors, who transact the exchanges between the planters and the Europeans; but are so little in a condition to carry on a brisk trade on their own account, that when a ship has not met with an opportunity of disposing of her lading, it is left in trust, on the account of the captain, in the hands of the commissary to whom it was consigned. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that what is not practised in America, would still be less so in Asia, where a larger stock would be wanted, and greater difficulties must be encountered. Add to this, that the supposed establishment of trading houses in India, would not supersede the necessity of societies in Europe; because it would be equally necessary to disburse twelve or fifteen hundred thousand livres * for the fitting out of every ship; which could never return into the stock till the third year, at soonest.

This

* About 60,000 l. on an average.

This necessity being once proved in every possible case, it is manifest, that the trade of India is of such a nature, that very few merchants, if any, can undertake it upon their own bottom, or carry it on by themselves, and without the help of a great number of associates. Having demonstrated the necessity of these societies, the next thing to be proved is, that their interest, and the nature of things, would incline them to unite in one and the same company.

This proposition depends upon two principal reasons; the danger of competition in the purchases and sales, and the necessity of assortments.

The competition of buyers and sellers reduces the commodities to their just value. When the competition of sellers is greater than that of buyers, the goods sell for less than they are worth; and when there are more buyers than sellers, their price is raised beyond their ordinary value. Let us apply this to the India trade.

When we suppose that this trade will extend in proportion to the number of private ships sent there, we are not aware that this multiplicity will only increase the competition on the side of the buyers; whereas, it is not in our power to increase it on the side of the sellers. It is just the same thing as if we were to advise a number of traders to go and outbid one another, that they might get their goods the cheaper.

The Indians hardly consume any of the produce, either of our lands, or of our industry. They have few wants, little ambition, and no great activity. They could easily want the gold and silver of America, which is so far from procuring them any enjoyments, that it is only a means of supporting the tyranny under which they are oppressed. Thus, as all objects of exchange have no value but in proportion to the wants or the fancy of the exchangers, it is evident, that in India our commodities are worth very little, whilst those we buy there are of great value. As long as we shall see no Indian ships come into our harbours, to fetch away our stuffs and our metals, we may venture to affirm, that those people are not in want of us, and will consequently make their own terms in all their dealings with us. Hence it follows, that the greater number there are of

European merchants who are concerned in this trade' the more the produce of India will rise, and our own sink, in value ; and that, at last, it will be only by immense exports, that we shall be able to procure any India goods at all. But if, in consequence of this order of things, each particular society is obliged to export more money, without bringing home more goods, they must carry on a losing trade ; and the same competition that began their ruin in Asia, will complete it in Europe ; because the number of sellers being then greater, whilst the number of buyers is still the same, the societies will be obliged to sell at a lower rate, after having bought at an advanced price.

The article of assortments is not less important. By assortments is meant the combination of all the several sorts of commodities that the different parts of India produce ; a combination which is proportioned to the present plenty or scarcity of each kind of commodity in Europe. On this chiefly depends the success, and all the profits, of the trade. But nothing would be more difficult in practice, for private societies, than this assortment. How, indeed, should those circumscribed and unconnected societies, whose interest it is to conceal their operations from each other, acquire the knowledge that is requisite for this important purpose ? How could they direct such a multitude of agents as must be employed ? It is plain, that the supercargoes and commissaries, incapable of general views, would be all asking for the same sort of goods at the same time, in hopes of making a greater profit. This would of course enhance the price of that article in India, and lower it in Europe, to the great detriment of the owners, and of the nation in general.

All these considerations would certainly not escape the captains of ships and monied men, who would be solicited to enter into these societies. They would be discouraged by the fear of standing in competition with other societies, either in the buying, selling, or making up the assortments. The number of these societies would soon be reduced ; and trade, instead of extending, would be daily contracted into a narrower circle, and finally be quite dropped.

It would, therefore, be for the interest of these private societies, as we have before observed, to unite together; because then, all their agents, both on the coast of Coromandel; and on that of Malabar in Bengal, being united and directed by one consistent system, would jointly labour in the several factories, to collect proper assortments for the cargoes that were to be sent away from the chief factory; so that the whole should make a complete assortment when brought home, being collected upon a uniform plan, and proportioned according to the orders and instructions sent from Europe.

But it would be in vain to expect, that any such union could take place without the concurrence of government. In some cases, men require to be encouraged; and it is chiefly, as in the present instance, when they are afraid of being denied that protection which they stand in need of, or apprehensive that favours may be granted to others, which may be injurious to them. Government would find it their interest to encourage this association, as it is certainly the surest, if not the only way to procure, at the cheapest rate, the India goods that are wanted for home-consumption, and for exportation. This truth will appear more striking, from a very simple instance.

Let us suppose a merchant, who fits out a ship for India with a considerable stock: Will he commission several agents at the same place to buy the goods he wants? Certainly not; because he will be sensible, that by executing his orders with great secrecy, each of them would injure the other, and must necessarily enhance the price of the goods; so that he would have a smaller quantity of the commodity for his money, than if he had employed but one agent. The application is easy: Government is the merchant, and the Company is the agent.

We have proved hitherto, that, in the India trade, the nature of things requires, that the subjects of one country should unite into one Company, both for their own interest, and for that of the state; but nothing has yet appeared, from whence it can be inferred, that this Company must be an exclusive one. We imagine, on the contrary, that the exclusive privilege always granted

to these Companies, is owing to something that is quite foreign to the essence of this trade.

When the several nations in Europe began to find, that it was their interest to take a part in the trade of India, which individuals refused to do, tho' that commerce had long been open to all, they found it necessary to form Companies, and to give them all the encouragement that so difficult an undertaking required. They advanced money for them; they endowed them with all the attributes of sovereign power; they permitted them to send ambassadors; they empowered them to make peace and war; and, unfortunately for them and for mankind, they have made too much use of that fatal privilege. They found it necessary, at the same time, to secure to them the means of indemnifying themselves for the expences of settlements, which must be very considerable. This gave rise to exclusive privileges, which at first were granted for a term of years, and afterwards made perpetual, from the following circumstances:

The brilliant prerogatives granted to the Companies were, in reality, so many impediments to trade. The right of having fortresses, implied the necessity of building and defending them: That of having troops implied the obligation of paying and recruiting them. The same held good with regard to the permission of sending ambassadors, and concluding treaties with the Indian princes. All this was attended with expences that were merely for show, only fit to check the progress of trade, and to intoxicate the agents and factors of the Companies, who fancied themselves sovereigns, and acted accordingly.

Nations, however, found it very convenient to have a kind of colonies in Asia, which seemed to cost them nothing; and as it was but reasonable, whilst the Companies bore all the burden of the expences, to secure to them all the profits, the privileges have been continued. But if, instead of attending only to this pretended economy, which could not be lasting, they had extended their views to futurity, and connected all the events which must naturally be brought about in the course of a number of years, they must have foreseen, that the expences of sovereignty, which can never be ascertained, because

because they depend upon numberless political contingencies, would, sooner or later, absorb both the profits and the stock of a trading Company : That then the public treasury must be exhausted to assist the chartered Company ; and that their favours, coming too late, could only repair the mischief already done, but would not remove the cause, and would leave the Companies forever in a state of mediocrity and languor.

But why should not governments at last allow themselves to be undeceived ? Why should they not take upon themselves a charge which properly belongs to them, and the burden of which, after having crushed the Companies, must finally fall upon them ? There would be then no further occasion for an exclusive privilege. The Companies which now exist, and are valuable on account of their old connections and established credit, should be carefully preserved : The appearance of monopoly would vanish for ever ; and their freedom might enable them to pursue some new track, which they could not think of, whilst they were encumbered with the charges annexed to the charter. On the other hand, the field of commerce, being open to all the members of the Community, would fertilize and thrive in their hands. They would attempt new discoveries, and form new enterprises. The trade from India to India, now sure of a market in Europe, would grow brisker, and extend farther. The Companies, attentive to all these operations, would measure their dealings by the progress of private trade ; and this competition, which could not be injurious to any, would be beneficial to the several states.

We apprehend this system would conduce to reconcile every interest, and is consistent with all principles. It seems to be liable but to one rational objection, either on the part of the advocates for the exclusive charter, or of those who contend for a free trade.

If the former should assert, that the Companies, without the exclusive charter, would have but a precarious existence, and would soon be ruined by private traders ; I should answer them, that they were surely then not in earnest, when they affirmed that private trade could never succeed. For, if it is able to ruin that of the Companies, as they now pretend, it can only be by engross-

sing every branch of their trade against their will, by a superiority of powers, and by the ascendant of liberty. Besides, what is it that really constitutes our Companies? It is their stock, their ships, their factories, and not their exclusive charter. What is it that has always ruined them? Extravagant expences, abuses of all kinds, visionary undertakings; in a word, bad administration, far more destructive than competition. But, if the distribution of their powers is made with prudence and economy, if the spirit of property directs their operations, there is no obstacle which they cannot surmount, no success which they may not expect.

If this success alarms the advocates for freedom; if they should say, on the other hand, that those rich and powerful Companies would terrify private men, and partly destroy that general and absolute freedom which is so necessary to trade, we should not be surprised to hear them start this objection; for men are almost always guided by reports, both in their actions and opinions. I do not except from this error the greatest part of our writers upon revenue. Commercial and civil liberty are the two tutelar deities of mankind, which we all reverence as well as they. But we are not to be seduced by words; we chuse to attend to the ideas they are meant to convey. I would ask those respectable enthusiasts for liberty, what they would wish; whether they would have the laws abolish the very name of those ancient Companies, that every citizen might boldly rush into the trade, and that they should all have the same means of procuring enjoyments, and the same resources to raise a fortune? But if such laws, with all that parade of liberty, are in fact exclusive laws; let not the deceitfulness of this language induce us to adopt them. When the state permits all its members to carry on a trade that requires a large stock, and which consequently very few are able to undertake; I would ask, what the bulk of the nation gets by this regulation? It seems as if we meant to expose their credulity, in suffering them to undertake impossibilities. If we totally suppress the Companies, there will be no India trade at all, or it will be only carried on by a few capital merchants.

I will

I will go farther still, and, bating the article of the exclusive charter, I will venture to affirm, that the India Company, by the manner in which they are settled, have made many people sharers in their trade, who would otherwise never have been concerned in it. Consider what a number of proprietors in every station, and of all ages, partake of the profits of this trade, and you will allow, that it would have been far more circumscribed if it had been in private hands; that the existence of Companies has only diffused it, whilst it seemed to restrain it; and that the moderate price of the shares must be a powerful motive to the people, to wish for the preservation of an establishment, which opens to them a track that would for ever have been shut against them, by a free trade.

In truth, we believe that Companies and private men might equally prosper, without injuring one another, or creating any jealousies between them. The Companies might still pursue those great objects, which, by their nature and extent, can only be managed by a wealthy and powerful association. Private men, on the contrary, would confine themselves to such objects as are in a manner overlooked by a great company, but might, by proper economy, and the combination of many small-powers, become a source of riches to the parties concerned.

It is the business of statesmen, who, by their talents, are called to the management of public affairs, to decide upon the notions of an obscure citizen, who may have been misled by his want of experience. The system of politics cannot too soon, nor too deeply, be applied to regulate a trade in which the fate of nations is so much interested, and will, probably, always be an affair of the utmost consequence.

To put an end to all intercourse between Europe and India, that luxury which has made such rapid progress in our part of the world should be banished from every state. Our effeminacy should not create a thousand wants, unknown to our forefathers. The rivalship of trade should no longer agitate the several nations who vie with each other in amassing riches. There should be such revolutions in the manners, customs, and opinions of

of men, as are never likely to happen. We should return within the limits of nature, which we seemed to have abandoned for ever.

Such are the last reflections suggested to us with respect to the connection of Europe with Asia. Let us now turn our thoughts to America.

BOOK

BOOK VI.

Discovery of America. Conquest of Mexico; and settlements of the Spaniards in that part of the New World.

A NCIENT history presents to our view a magnificent spectacle. The continued representation of great revolutions, heroic manners, and extraordinary events, will become more and more interesting, in proportion to the uncommonness of our meeting with occurrences that bear any resemblance to them. The time of laying the foundation of empires, and again overthrowing them, is past. The man, before whom *the world was silent*, is no more. The different nations of the earth, after tedious struggles, and obstinate wars between ambition and liberty, seem at last settled in the wretched tranquillity of slavery. They now employ thunder in their battles, merely to take a few towns, to gratify the caprice of a few powerful men; they formerly employed the sword in the destruction or establishment of kingdoms, or in vindicating the natural rights of mankind. Our history is now insipid and trifling; yet we are not become more happy. A uniform and daily plan of oppression has succeeded to the troubles and storms of conquest; and we behold, with indifference, the various ranks of abject slaves combating each other with their chains, for the amusement of their masters.

Parallel of ancient and modern history.

Europe, that part of the globe which has most influence over all the rest, seems to have fixed itself on a solid and durable foundation. The different communities of which it consists, are almost equally powerful, enlightened, extended, and jealous. They are perpetually making encroachments upon each other; and in the midst of this continual fluctuation, some will gain, and others lose; and the balance will alternately incline from

from one side to another, without ever being entirely destroyed. Religious fanaticism, and the spirit of conquest, those two disturbers of the universe, have ceased to operate. That great lever, whose extremity was on earth, and whose center of motion was in heaven, is now broken ; and kings begin to discover (though not for the happiness of their people, who attract little of their attention, but for their own private interest) that the great end of government is to obtain riches and security. Hence they maintain numerous armies, fortify their frontiers, and encourage trade.

A spirit of barter and exchange hath arisen in Europe, that seems to open a vast field of speculation to adventurers, but delights most in peace and tranquillity. A war, among commercial nations, is a conflagration that destroys them all ; it is an action, which brings the whole fortune of a great merchant into question, and alarms all his creditors. The time is not far off, when the tacit sanction of government will extend to the private engagements between subjects of different nations, and when those bankruptcies, the effects of which are felt at immense distances, will become matters of state. In these mercantile states, the discovery of an island, the importation of a new commodity, the invention of some useful machine, the construction of a port, the establishment of a factory, the carrying off a branch of trade from a rival nation, will be esteemed achievements of the utmost importance ; and the annals of nations will fall to be written by commercial philosophers, as they were formerly by historical orators.

The discovery of a new world is alone sufficient to furnish employment for our curiosity. A vast continent entirely uncultivated, human nature reduced to the mere animal state, fields without harvests, treasures without proprietors, societies without police, and men without manners ; what an interesting and instructive spectacle would these have formed for a Locke, a Buffon, or a Montesquieu ! What history could be so surprising, so delightful, so affecting, as the detail of their voyage ! But the face of rude unpolished nature is already disfigured. We shall endeavour to collect the features of it, though now half effaced, as soon as we have made the reader

reader acquainted with those rapacious and savage Christians, whom an unhappy accident first brought to the other hemisphere.

SPAIN, anciently known by the names of Hesperia, and Iberia, was inhabited by men, who, defended on one side by the sea, and on the other by the Pyrenean mountains, enjoyed, in peace, an agreeable climate, a plentiful country, and governed themselves according to their own customs. The southern part of this nation had, in some degree, emerged from its state of barbarity, by means of a transient intercourse it maintained with foreigners; but the inhabitants of the coasts on the ocean continued to resemble all those nations, which know no other occupation but that of the chace. They were so attached to this kind of life, that they left the toils of agriculture entirely to their women; the fatigues of which they had brought them to support, by establishing an annual general assembly, in which those who had most distinguished themselves in the exercise of cultivation, received public applause.

Ancient revolutions of Spain.

Such was the situation of Spain, when the Carthaginians cast their longing eyes on a country filled with riches, of which its inhabitants were entirely ignorant. These traders, whose ships covered the Mediterranean, introduced themselves in the quality of friends, who offered numberless commodities, in return for useless metals. The temptations of a trade, so advantageous in appearance, blinded the Spaniards to that degree, that they permitted these republicans to build, upon their coasts, houses for their occasional residence, magazines for the security of their merchandise, and temples for the exercise of their religion. These establishments insensibly became fortresses, of which this trading power, whose policy was superior to its arms, availed itself, to enslave a credulous nation, always divided within itself, and irreconcileable in its enmities. By bribing some, and intimidating others, Carthage succeeded in the conquest of Spain, by the assistance of Spanish soldiers, and Spanish wealth.

The Carthaginians having thus become masters of the greatest

greatest and most valuable part of this fine country, shewed that they either knew not, or despised the means of establishing their dominion. Instead of continuing to appropriate to themselves the gold and silver, with which the conquered nations were abundantly supplied from their mines, by exchanging for them commodities of little value, they resolved to carry off every thing by force. Nor was this tyannical disposition peculiar to the republic; the general, the officers, the private men, and even the merchants, acted upon the same principle. The violence of their proceedings threw the conquered provinces into despair, and made the apprehension of so heavy a yoke intolerable to those which were yet free. These sentiments determined both the one and the other to accept of succours, which proved no less fatal than the calamities they were intended to redress; and Spain became a theatre of jealousy, ambition, and hatred, between Rome and Carthage.

The two commonwealths contended with great obstinacy, for the empire of this fine part of Europe; and, perhaps, it would at last have belonged to neither of them, if the Spaniards had continued quiet spectators of the quarrel, and left the rival nations time to exhaust each other. But, chusing to become actors in the bloody scene, they reduced themselves to be slaves to the Romans, in which state they continued till the fifth century.

In a short time, the degeneracy of those masters of the world, inspired the savage nations of the north with courage to seize upon some provinces that were ill governed and ill defended. The Swedes, the Vandals, and Goths, passed the Pyrenees. As these barbarians were robbers by profession, they were incapable of becoming citizens, and made war upon each other. The Goths, superior in abilities or good fortune, subdued the rest, and reduced all the kingdoms of Spain into one; which, notwithstanding the defects in its constitution, and the unbounded extortions of the Jews, who were the only merchants, supported itself till the commencement of the eighth century.

At this period, the Moors, who had made themselves masters of Africa, with that impetuosity which distinguished

guished all their enterprizes, passed the sea. They found a king without virtues and without abilities; a multitude of courtiers, and not one minister; soldiers without courage, and generals without experience; an effeminate people, disgusted with the government, and disposed to change their master; and rebels, who joined them for the sake of plundering, burning, and massacring all that fell in their way. In less than three years, the sovereignty of the Christians was destroyed, and that of the infidels established upon a solid foundation.

Spain was indebted to its conquerors, for the seeds of taste, humanity, politeness, philosophy, several arts, and a considerable trade. These flourishing times lasted not long. The numberless sects that arose among the conquerors, and the irreparable faults they committed in establishing distinct sovereigns in all the principal towns of their dominion, soon put an end to them.

During this time, the Goths, who, to avoid the Mohammedan power, had found an asylum in the extremity of the Asturias, were labouring under the yoke of anarchy, plunged in a barbarous state of ignorance, oppressed by their fanatical priests, languishing in inexpressible poverty, and perpetually harassed by civil wars. Under the influence of these calamities, far from availing themselves of the divisions among their enemies, they thought themselves sufficiently happy to be forgotten, or not to be known by them. But, as soon as the crown, which was originally elective, became hereditary in the tenth century; as soon as the nobility and bishops became incapable of disturbing the state, and the people, raised from slavery, were admitted to a share of the government, the national spirit began to revive. The Arabians, attacked on every side, were successively stripped of their conquests. At the end of the fifteenth century, they had but one little kingdom remaining.

Their fall would have been more rapid, had they been engaged with a power that could have united, in one common centre, the conquests it gained over them. But this was not the case. The Mohammedans were attacked by different chiefs, each of which was at the head of an independent state. Spain was divided into as many

kingdoms as it contained provinces; and it was not till after a long time, many wars and revolutions, that these petty states were at last melted down into the two monarchies of Castile and Arragon. After which the marriage of Isabella with Ferdinand, having happily united all the crowns of Spain in one family, they found themselves equal to the enterprize of attacking the kingdom of Granada.

This state, which scarcely occupied one eighth part of the peninsula of Spain, had always been in a flourishing condition, since the invasion of the Saracens: but its prosperity increased, in proportion as the successes of the Christians induced a greater number of the infidel inhabitants to take refuge there; at which time, it consisted of three millions of inhabitants. Throughout the rest of Europe, there were no lands so well cultivated, such numerous and improved manufactures, so regular and so extensive a navigation. The public revenues amounted to seven millions of livres*; a prodigious sum, at a time when gold and silver were very scarce.

These important advantages, far from deterring the monarchs of Castile and Arragon from invading Granada, were the motives that principally stimulated them to the enterprize. It cost them a ten years bloody war, to subdue this flourishing province. The conquest of it was completed by the taking of the capital, in the beginning of January 1492.

Columbus forms the design of discovering America. It was in these glorious times that Christopher Columbus, a man of obscure birth, whose knowledge of astronomy and navigation was far superior to that of his cotemporaries, proposed to the Spaniards, who were happy at home, to aggrandize themselves abroad.

He was led by a secret impulse, to imagine that there must certainly be another continent, and that he was the person destined to discover it. The notion of Antipodes, which superstition had condemned as heretical and impious, and reason

reason itself had treated as chimerical, appeared, to this penetrating genius, to have its foundation in truth. This idea, perhaps the boldest that ever entered into the heart of man, took strong possession of his imagination; and having in vain proposed the acquisition of a new hemisphere to his native country Genoa, to Portugal where he then resided, and even to England, which he might have expected would have readily embraced every project of extending its maritime power, he communicated his designs to Isabella.

The ministers of this princess, who looked upon the scheme of discovering a new world as the project of a distempered brain, treated the author of it, for some time, with that contemptuous insolence, which true genius often experiences from men in power, whose abilities do not rise beyond the common standard. But no difficulties could discourage Columbus, who, like all others that engage in extraordinary enterprizes, had a large share of that enthusiasm which renders them superior to the cavils of the ignorant, the contempt of the proud, the evasions of the covetous, and the delays of the indolent. At length, by perseverance, spirit, and courage, assisted by the arts of prudence and address, he surmounted every difficulty. Having obtained a grant of three small vessels, and ninety men, he set sail, on the 3d of August 1492, with the title of admiral and viceroy of the islands and territories he should discover.

After a long navigation, the ships crews, terrified with the idea of the immense tract of ocean, which lay between them and their native country, began to despair of the success of their undertaking. Their discontent rose to that height, that they, more than once, proposed to throw Columbus over-board, and to return to Spain. The admiral concealed his chagrin, as well as he could: but, finding that a mutiny would immediately ensue, he assured his companions, that if he did not discover land in three days, he would sail back to Europe. For some time past, on sounding, he had found a bottom; and, from other circumstances, had good reason to conclude, that he was not far from land.

*Arrival of
Columbus
in the new
world.*

It was in the month of October that the new world was discovered. Columbus landed on one of the Lucayas or Bahama islands, which he called San-Salvador, and took possession of it in the name of Isabella. The Spaniards, at that time, did not imagine there could be any injustice in seizing upon a country which was not inhabited by Christians.

The islanders, on seeing the ships, and a race of men so different from their own, were terrified, and ran away. The Spaniards caught some of them; treated them with great civility, and dismissed them loaded with presents.

This behaviour entirely dissipated the fears of the whole nation; the inhabitants appeared upon the shore unarmed. Several of them came on board. They viewed every thing with admiration. Their manner was free and open. They brought fruits. They assisted the Spaniards in getting on shore, by taking them upon their shoulders. The inhabitants of the neighbouring islands showed the same obliging disposition. The sailors, sent by Columbus to make discoveries, every where met with the kindest reception. Men, women, and children, were employed in furnishing them with provisions. They filled the hammocks where they slept with the finest cotton. But it was gold that the Spaniards wanted; and they soon discovered it. Several of the savages wore ornaments made of this precious metal, which they presented to their new guests; who, on their part, were more disgusted with the naked appearance and simplicity of these people, than penetrated with their kindness. They were incapable of discerning in them the genuine characters of nature. Surprized to find men of a copper colour, without beards, or hair on their bodies, they considered them as a race of imperfect animals, who were only to be treated with humanity, till the necessary information was obtained, in regard to the neighbouring countries, and the gold mines.

Having viewed several smaller islands, Columbus landed on the north side of a large island, called by the natives Hayti; to which he gave the name of Hispaniola and which is now called San-Domingo. He was conducted

conducted thither by some savages of the other islands, who accompanied him without the least distrust, and gave him to understand, that the great island furnished them with the metal the Spaniards were so fond of.

THE island of Hayti, which is two hundred leagues in length, and sixty, and, in some places, eighty in breadth, is divided from east to west by a chain of mountains, which occupy the centre of the island, and are for the most part steep. It was distributed into five populous kingdoms, the inhabitants of which lived in perfect amity.

Their kings, who are called Caciques, were absolute, and much beloved. The complexion of these people was much fairer than in the other islands. They painted their bodies. The men went quite naked. The married women wore a kind of cotton petticoat, which reached no further than their knees. The girls, as well as the men, were naked. Their food was maize, roots, fruit, and shell-fish. As they were temperate, nimble, and active, but not strong, they were averse from labour. They lived free from care, in a state of agreeable indolence. Their time was spent in dancing, diversion, and sleep. By the accounts the Spaniards gave of them, they shewed few marks of genius; and, indeed, this must be the case with islanders, who, living in a state of separation from the rest of mankind, must, of necessity, have very confined ideas. Detached societies arrive at improvement by slow and painful advances. They derive no advantages of refinement from those discoveries, which time and experience throw in the way of other people; and their adventures are too few, to afford them many opportunities of acquiring knowledge.

The Spaniards themselves confess, that these people were humane, void of malice and revenge, and almost divested of any passion whatever. They were ignorant, but shewed no desire to be instructed. This indifference, and the confidence they put in strangers, prove that they were happy. Their history, and their notions of morality, were contained in a collection of songs, which they

*Customs
of the people
of Hay-
ti, since
known by
the name of
Hispanio-
la.*

learned from their infancy : and they had, in common with all nations, some fables concerning the origin of the human race.

We know little of their religion, to which they paid no great attention ; and it is probable that in this respect, as well as in many others, they have been calumniated by the authors of their destruction ; who pretend that these islanders, whose manners were so gentle, paid adoration to a number of malevolent beings. The worshippers of a malevolent deity can never be virtuous.

They had no law that prescribed any limited number of wives. It was common for one of them to have some privileges and distinctions allotted her ; but these gave her no authority over the rest. She was one whom the husband loved the best, and by whom he thought himself best beloved. On the death of her partner, she sometimes caused herself to be buried in the same grave with him. This was not a custom, a duty, or a point of honour among this people ; but the wife found it impossible to survive the object of her tenderest affection. This freedom in love and marriage, which was authorised by their laws and manners, was by the Spaniards called debauchery, licentiousness, and vice : And to the pretended excessive indulgence of the islanders in this point, they attributed the rise of a distemper, which, as a philosophical physician has lately demonstrated in a treatise on the origin of the venerel disease, was known in Europe before the discovery of America.

These islanders had no other weapons than a bow, and arrows made of wood, the point of which, being hardened in the fire, was sometimes armed with sharp stones, or the bone of a fish. The ordinary dress of the Spaniards was of itself an impenetrable armour against arrows of this kind, shot with little dexterity. These weapons, and some small clubs, or rather large sticks, which could seldom give a mortal blow, were far from making these people formidable.

They were divided into different classes, one of which laid claim to a kind of nobility : But we are little acquainted either with the prerogatives annexed to this distinction, or the means of obtaining it. This ignorant

rant and savage people had also sorcerers among them, who were always either the offspring or parents of superstition.

Columbus omitted nothing that might engage the friendship of these islanders. But, at the same time, he let them know, that though he had no inclination to hurt them, he did not want the power. The proofs he gave in their presence, of the surprizing effects of his artillery, convinced them of the truth of what he said. They looked upon the Spaniards as men descended from heaven; and the presents they received were, in their estimation, not mere curiosities, but sacred things. This error was productive of great advantages: Nor was it removed by any act of folly or cruelty. They gave the savages red caps, glass beads, pins, knives, and bells, and received in return gold and provisions.

Columbus took advantage of this harmony, to fix upon a place for a settlement, which he designed should be the centre of all his future projects. He erected a fort, with the assistance of the islanders, who cheerfully laboured to forge chains for themselves. He left thirty-nine Castilians in the place; and, having reconnoitered the greatest part of the island, sailed for Spain.

He arrived at Palos, a port of Andalusia, from whence he had set sail seven months before. He proceeded by land to Barcelona, where the court resided. This voyage was a triumph. The nobility and people went to meet him, and followed him in crowds to the presence of Ferdinand and Isabella. He presented to them some islanders, who had voluntarily accompanied him. He produced pieces of gold, birds, cotton, and many curiosities, which were valuable on account of their novelty. Such a variety of uncommon objects, exposed to the view of a people, whose vanity, inflamed by imagination, magnified every thing, made them fancy that they saw an inexhaustible source of riches for ever flowing into their country. The enthusiasm even reached the throne. At the public audience the sovereign gave to Columbus, he was permitted to be covered, and to sit as a grandee of Spain. He related his voyage to them. They loaded him with caresses, commendations, and honours; and, soon after, he reembarked with seventeen

venteen sail to make new discoveries, and to establish colonies.

On his arrival at San-Domingo with fifteen hundred soldiers, three hundred artificers, missionaries, corn, fruits, and such domestic animals as were unknown in the new world, Columbus found his fortress demolished, and all the Spaniards massacred. It appeared, on examination, clear to Columbus, that they had drawn this misfortune upon themselves, by their haughty, licentious, and tyrannical behaviour: And he had the address to persuade those who had less moderation than himself, that it was good policy to postpone their revenge to another time. They employed themselves entirely in scrutinizing the mines, the working of which was one day to cost so much blood; and in building forts in the neighbourhood, with sufficient garrisons to protect their labours.

*Cruelties
exercised
towards
the Indians
at
Hispaniola.*

In the mean time, the provisions that had been brought from Europe were spoilt by the damp heat of the climate; and the few hands sent over for the purpose of raising vegetables in a country so favourable to their growth, were either dead, or disabled by sickness. The military people were desirous to supply their place; but they disdained an employment that was to procure them subsistence. Indolence began then to be an honourable distinction in Spain. To do nothing was esteemed the characteristic of a gentleman: And the meanest soldier chose to live in the highest style, in a country where he had the command. The islanders offered them every thing; but they required more. They were perpetually asking them for provisions and gold. In short, these unhappy people harassed themselves in gardening, hunting, fishing, and working in the mines, to gratify the insatiable Spaniards, who, at the same time, considered them in no other light, but that of traitors and rebellious slaves, whose lives might be taken away at pleasure.

Columbus, finding that the Indians were exasperated by this barbarous treatment, returned from pursuing his discoveries, in hopes of bringing the parties to a reconciliation:

ciliation: But the mutinous clamours of a fierce and rapacious soldiery drove them into hostilities, which were contrary to his sentiments, both as a man and as a politician. With two hundred foot, and twenty horse, he ventured to attack an army said to consist of a hundred thousand men, on the spot where the city of St Jago was afterwards built.

The unhappy Indians were conquered before the engagement. They looked upon the Spaniards as beings of a superior order. Their admiration, respect, and fear, were increased by the European armour: And the sight of the horse, in particular, astonished them beyond measure. Many of them were simple enough to believe, that the man and the horse were the same animal, or a kind of deity. Had their courage even been proof against these impressions of terror, they could have made but a faint resistance. The cannonading, the pikes, and a discipline to which they were strangers, must have easily dispersed them. They fled on all sides. They demanded peace, which was granted them, on condition that they should cultivate the land for the Spaniards, and furnish them with a certain quantity of gold every month.

These hard terms, and the cruelties that aggravated them, soon became insupportable. To avoid them, the islanders took refuge in the mountains, where they hoped to procure the small subsistence their necessities required, by hunting and gathering wild fruits, till their enemies, who each of them required more nourishment than ten Indians, finding themselves deprived of provisions, should be obliged to repass the seas. But they were disappointed in their expectations. The Castilians maintained themselves by the supplies they received from Europe, and pursued their horrid plan with more eagerness than ever. No place was inaccessible to their rage. They trained their dogs to hunt and devour the unhappy Indians: and some of them made a vow to massacre twelve every day in honour of the twelve Apostles. By these means, a third part of these nations was destroyed. On their arrival, the island was supposed to contain a million of inhabitants. All accounts agree, that this

number is not exaggerated; and it is certain, that the population was considerable.

Those who had the good fortune to escape misery, fatigue, alarm, and the sword, were forced to submit to the will of the conqueror, who exercised his power with more rigour, as it was not now restrained by the presence of Columbus. This great man was returned to Spain, to inform the court of the barbarities, which the character of the people under him made it impossible for him to prevent, and which the voyages he was perpetually engaged in, did not permit him to controul. During his absence the colony which he had left under his brother's command, was torn by dissensions, animosities, and mutinies. No orders were obeyed, unless when some cacique was to be dethroned, some hord pillaged or demolished, or some nation extirpated. The moment these savage troops had got possession of the treasures of these unhappy people, whose throats they had cut, the disturbances were renewed. The desire of independency, and the difficulty of making an equal distribution of plunder among a set of men equally greedy, created dissensions. Authority was no longer respected; the subalterns paid as little regard to their commanders, as the commanders did to the laws: and open war at last broke out among themselves.

The Indians, who sometimes bore a part in these bloody and detestable scenes, and were always witnesses of them, recovered their courage a little. Notwithstanding their simplicity, they saw far enough, to judge, that it was by no means impracticable to rid themselves of a small number of tyrants who appeared to have lost sight of their projects, and attended to nothing but the gratification of the implacable hatred they bore to one another: animated by this hope, they engaged in a confederacy, which was managed with more address than could have been expected, and had acquired considerable strength. The Spaniards, who persisted in destroying each other, notwithstanding they were threatened by so great a danger, would probably have fallen victims to their own obstinacy, had not Columbus arrived from Europe at this critical juncture.

The distinguished reception he had met with there, at first,

first, had made but a slight impression upon the people. Time, which brings in reflection to counterwork the magic of enthusiasm, had destroyed that fondness for expedition to the new world, which at first so strongly prevailed. The ostentatious display of the treasures brought from thence, ceased to be an incitement: on the contrary, the livid complexions of all the people who returned home, and the severe and disgraceful distempers under which the greater part laboured; the accounts of the unwholesomeness of the climate, of the numbers who had lost their lives, and the hardships they had undergone, from the scarcity of provisions; an unwillingness to obey a foreigner, who was blamed for the severity of his discipline; and, perhaps, the jealousy they entertained of his growing reputation, all contributed to produce an insuperable prejudice against San-Domingo, in the subjects of the province of Castile, the only Spaniards who were allowed to embark in that enterprise.

It was necessary, however, to procure planters at any rate: the admiral therefore proposed to have recourse to the prisons; and, by rescuing the greatest malefactors from death and infamy, to make them the instruments of extending the power of their country, of which they had been the bane and disgrace. This project would have been attended with fewer inconveniences in such colonies as, having gained a more solid establishment, might, by the force of their laws, and the purity of their manners, restrain or correct the excesses of a few licentious and profligate individuals. But infant states require founders of a different character from a train of banditti. America will never get rid of the remains of that alloy which debased the first colonies that were transported thither from Europe. Columbus soon experienced the ill effects of his injudicious proposal.

Had this enterprizing seaman carried out with him men of the common stamp, he might, during the voyage, have inspired them with honest principles, at least, if not with high notions of honour. These persons, on their arrival, would have constituted a majority, and the rest would have been obliged, or rather disposed to adopt the examples of moderation and obedience they would

would have set them. Such a harmony would have been productive of the most salutary effects, and have established the colony on the most solid foundation. The Indians would have been better treated, the men worked to greater advantage, and the taxes more easily collected. The mother-country, animated by this success to the greatest attempts, might have formed new settlements, which would have augmented the glory, the wealth, and the power of Spain. These important events, which might have been brought forward in a few years, were rendered abortive by this single piece of mismanagement.

The malefactors who accompanied Columbus, in conjunction with the free-booters at San-Domingo, formed a society the most abandoned imaginable. They were strangers to subordination, decency, and humanity. The admiral, in particular, was the object of their resentment, who saw too late the fatal error he himself had committed; or into which, perhaps, he had been betrayed by his enemies. This extraordinary man passed very dear for the fame which his genius and industry had procured him. His life exhibited a perpetual contrast between these incidents which either elate or depress the mind of a conqueror. He was not only continually exposed to cabals, calumnies, and the ingratitudo of individuals, but had the caprice of a haughty and suspicious court to encounter, which by turns rewarded, or punished, carassed, or disgraced him.

The prejudice entertained by the Spanish ministry against the author of the greatest discovery ever made operated so far, that an arbitrator was dispatched to the new world, to decide between Columbus and his soldiers. Bovadilla, the most ambitious, self-interested, unjust, and hot-headed person America had ever beheld, arrived at San-Domingo, put the admiral in irons, and conducted him to Spain like the worst of criminals. The court, ashamed of so ignominious a treatment, granted him his liberty; but without redressing the injury he had received, or restoring him to his employments. Such was the fate of this uncommon man, who, to the astonishment of Europe, added a fourth part of the earth, or rather half a world, to this globe, which had been so long desolate, and so little known. It might reasonably have been

been expected, that public gratitude would have given the name of this bold adventurer to the new hemisphere, the first discovery of which was owing to his enterprising genius. This was the least homage of respect that could be paid to his memory: but, either through envy, inattention, or the caprice of fortune in the distribution of fame, this honour was reserved for Americus Vespucius, who only trod in the footsteps of a man whose name ought to stand foremost in the list of great characters. Thus, the very æra which added America to the known world, was distinguished by a specimen of injustice, which was a fatal prelude to those scenes of violence, of which these unhappy climes were afterwards to be the theatre.

After the disgrace of Columbus, and the death of Isabella, these abuses became more frequent. Though the islanders were condemned to undergo a degree of drudgery, which often proved fatal to them, and to pay the most exorbitant fines, they had hitherto continued to live in their hords, after the manner of the country, and under the government of their caciques. In the year 1506, Ferdinand was petitioned to make a distribution of them among the conquerors, that they might be employed in the mines, or in any other kinds of labour that tyranny might think proper to inflict. Religion and policy were the two pretences made use of to palliate this inhuman plan. It was urged, that so long as these savages were tolerated in their superstitions, they would never embrace christianity; and would always be in a disposition to revolt, unless their dispersion put it out of their power to make any attempt. The monarch complied with their request at the instance of the clergy, whose intolerant principles always transported them into violent measures. The whole island was divided into a great number of districts. Every Spaniard, whether a native of Castile or Arragon, was indiscriminately allotted a larger or a smaller part, in proportion to his rank, interest, or birth. The Indians, assigned to each district, from this instant, became slaves, whose services and lives were at the disposal of their masters. This cruel arrangement was afterwards adopted in all the settlements in the new world.

The produce of the mines was now more certain. A first one half belonged to the crown. This claim was afterwards reduced to one third, and at length limited to a fifth part.

The treasures brought from San-Domingo excite the avarice even of those who would not venture to cross the seas. The grandes, and those who had employments in the state, obtained grants, by which they enriched themselves without any trouble. They committed the care of them to agents who were to make their own fortunes, while they increased those of their principals. Impossible as it seemed, there was now an augmentation of cruelties. In five years after this barbarous system took place, the natives were reduced to fourteen thousand; and the continent and the adjacent islands were obliged to be ransacked for savages to supply their place.

They were indiscriminately chained together like beasts. Those who sunk under their burdens were compelled to rise by severe blows. There was no intercourse between the sexes, but by stealth. The men perished in the mines, and the women in the fields, which they cultivated with their weak hands. Their constitutions already exhausted with excessive labour, were still further impaired by an unwholesome and scanty diet. The mothers expired with hunger and fatigue, pressing their dead or dying infants to their breasts, shrivelled and contracted for want of a proper supply of milk. The fathers either poisoned themselves, or sought death on those very trees, on which they had just before seen their wives or their children expire.

The Spaniards, before their first settlements in the new world were laid waste by these scenes of horror, had formed some of less note at Jamaica, Porto-Rico, and Cuba. Velasquez, the founder of the last of these, was desirous that his colony should enjoy, together with that of San-Domingo, the advantage of making discoveries upon the continent; and he fixed upon Francis Hernandez of Cordova, to conduct this glorious undertaking. He furnished him with three vessels, and a hundred and ten men, with permission to erect forts, to bring off slaves, or to export gold at his own discretion. This voyage,

voyage, which was made in 1517, was productive of no event except the discovery of Lyncatan.

John of Gyalva, who was fitted out the following year with a view of obtaining a more accurate knowledge of this country, discharged his commission with ability ; but he did not confine himself to this object : he surveyed the coast of Campeachy, pursued his voyage still farther north, and disembarked wherever he found a convenient landing place. Though he did not always meet with a favourable reception, his expedition proved extremely successful. He brought home a great quantity of gold, and got a sufficient insight into the extent, opulence, and strength of Mexico.

The conquest of this vast empire appeared too great an undertaking for a man of Gyalva's abilities. Fernando Cortez, who was more distinguished on account of the expectations the world entertained of his future conduct, than by the great services he had already performed, was unanimously fixed upon to carry this plan into execution. According to the representation given of him by his adherents, it appears that he had such an uncommon strength of constitution, that he was able to undergo the greatest fatigues ; that he possessed the talent of eloquence in an eminent degree ; a sagacity, which foresaw every thing ; a presence of mind, not to be overcome by the most unexpected events ; that he was fruitful in expedients ; that he knew how to reduce those to subjection, who refused to listen to terms of accommodation ; that his constancy was such, that he never receded from the point in view ; and that he had that enthusiastic love of glory, which has ever been considered as the leading qualification in a hero. This advantageous idea has long prevailed among the generality of people, whose judgments are, and must ever be regulated by the standard of success alone. But since philosophy has thrown a new light upon history, it is become a matter of doubt, whether the faults of Cortez did not overbalance his great qualities.

Be this, however, as it may, this man, who was af-

terwards so celebrated, was no sooner invested by Vela quez with the command of the most important expedition that had hitherto been undertaken to the new world than he found himself on an eminence, which presents the prospects of fame and fortune in all their charm. Having surmounted the obstacles which jealousy and enmity threw in his way, he set sail, on the 10th of February 1519. His forces consisted of five hundred and eight soldiers, a hundred and nine sailors, with their proper officers; some horses, and a small train of artillery. This armament, inconsiderable as it was, was not equipped by government, which only lent the sanction of its name to the attempts that were made to discover new countries, and form new settlements. They were all carried on at the expence of private persons, who were ruined, if they failed in their enterprizes; while their success enlarged the dominion of the mother-country. In the course of these early expeditions, the state did not form any plan, advance any money, or raise any troops. The love of gold, and the spirit of chivalry which still prevailed, were the only incitements to industry and activity. Their influence, however, was so powerful, that not only the common people, but great numbers of distinguished rank, flew with impatience to mix with savages in the torrid zone, where the climate is frequently unwholesome. There was, perhaps, at that time, no people upon earth, besides the Spaniards, so frugal, so much incurious to fatigue, or so accustomed to the intemperature of a hot climate, as to be able to endure so many hardships.

Cortez, who was remarkable for these qualities, in his way, attacked the Indians at Tabasco, defeated them in several engagements, granted them peace, entered into an alliance with them, and brought away several of their women, who were very glad to follow him. This readiness of theirs had a natural cause.

In America, the men were in general addicted to that shameful kind of debauchery which shocks nature, and perverts animal instinct. This depravity has been attributed by some to natural weakness; which, however, should rather seem to repress, than to encourage it. It may, perhaps, be ascribed to the heat of the climate, the contempt

contempt the men have for the softer sex, the little pleasure that can be experienced in the arms of a woman harassed with labour, the inconstancy of taste, the caprice which incites us, in every particular, to enjoyments that are least common, and to a certain pursuit after pleasure, more easy to be conceived, than explained with decency. Besides, have not those hunting parties, in which the men are frequently absent from the women for two months, contributed to familiarize men more with each other? This vice is, therefore, in these countries nothing more than the consequence of an universal and violent passion, which, even in civilized countries, tramples upon honour, virtue, decency, probity, the ties of consanguinity, and patriotic sentiment: besides that there are some actions, to which civilized people have, with reason, attached moral ideas, that never have entered into the minds of savages.

However this may be, the arrival of the Europeans raised new ideas in the American women. They threw themselves, without reserve, into the arms of these libidinous strangers, who had inured themselves to cruelty, and whose avaricious hands were drenched in blood. While the unfortunate remains of these savage nations were endeavouring to separate themselves from the sword that pursued them, by immense tracts of deserts, their women, who had been hitherto too much neglected, boldly trampling on the carcases of their children, and of their murdered husbands, went to seek their destroyers even in their camp, in order to entice them to share the ardent transports with which they were devoured. This fury of the American women, in favour of the Spaniards, may be reckoned among the causes that contributed to the conquest of the new world. These women usually served them as guides, frequently procured them subsistence, and sometimes betrayed conspiracies to them.

The most celebrated of these women was named Marina. Though she was the daughter of a pretty powerful cacique, she had been reduced, by some singular events, to a state of slavery among the Mexicans from her earliest infancy. She had been brought by fresh incidents to Tabasco, before the arrival of the Spaniards.

Struck with her vigour and her charms, they soon distinguished her from the rest. Their general surrendere his heart to her, and at the same time excited a warm passion in her breast. In the midst of amorous embrace she readily learned the Spanish language. Cortez, on his part, soon discovered the intelligent mind, and resolute character of his mistress; and not only made her his interpreter, but also his adviser. All historians agree, that she acted a considerable part in every enterprize against Mexico.

Cortez arrives at Mexico. His engagements with the province of Tlascala.

It has been alledged, that this empire had not then been founded above a century. In order to establish a circumstance of so little credibility, it is necessary we should have other testimony than that of the Spaniard who had neither the ability nor the will to examine any thing; and better authority than that of their fanatic priests, who wanted to establish their own superstitions, by abolishing the worship of these people. What should

we have known of China, if the Portuguese had been able to set it on fire, overthrow or destroy it as they did the Brazils? Should we now converse about the antiquity of its books, its laws, and its manners? When some few philosophers have been suffered to penetrate into Mexico, there to find out and clear the ruins of their history, and that these learned men shall neither be monks nor Spaniards, but English and French men, who will be allowed every liberty, and have all the means of getting at the truth; then perhaps we may learn, whether barbarism has not destroyed the ancient records that might have discovered the traces of it.

Our lights, concerning the founders of the empire are not more certain than those we have with respect to the era of its foundation. This is another of those facts of the knowledge of which, the ignorance of the Spaniards has deprived us. Their credulous historians have indeed told us, in an uncertain and vague manner, that some barbarians, who formed a national body, issuing from the north of this continent, had succeeded in subduing successively some savages born under a milder sky, and

and who either did not live in a social state, or formed only small societies.

All that we can affirm, is, that Montezuma was the sovereign of Mexico, when the Spaniards landed on the coasts of that empire. This monarch was soon informed of the arrival of these strangers. Throughout this vast extent of kingdom, couriers were placed at different distances, who speedily acquainted the court with every thing that happened in the most distant provinces. Their dispatches were made up in pieces of cotton, upon which were delineated the several circumstances of the affairs that demanded the attention of government. The figures were intermixed with hieroglyphic characters, which supplied what the art of the painter had not been able to express.

It was to be expected, that a prince who had been raised to the throne by his valour, who had extended his empire by conquest, who had numerous and disciplined armies, would either send to attack, or would himself fall upon a handful of adventurers, who dared to infest his dominions with their rapine. This, however, was not the case. The Spaniards, who had always an irresistible turn to the marvellous, endeavoured to explain, by having recourse to a miracle, a conduct so evidently opposite to the character of the monarch, and so incompatible with his situation. The writers of this superstitious nation have not scrupled to declare to the whole universe, that, a little before the discovery of the new world, it had been foretold to the Mexicans, that an invincible people from the east would soon come among them, who would, in a memorable and terrible manner, avenge the gods, enraged on account of their horrid crimes, and particularly by that vice which is most repugnant to nature. This fatal prediction alone, they say, fascinated the great understanding of Montezuma. By this imposture, they have imagined, that they should gain the double advantage of justifying their usurpations, and making heaven answerable for a part of their cruelties. This absurd fable has for a long time obtained credit among some persons in both hemispheres; and such infatuation is not so surprising, as it might at first be imagined. The reasons of it will be made evident, by a few reflections.

The earth has ever been subject to revolutions. Besides its diurnal and annual motion from west to east, it may have an insensible one, which, though silent as the lapse of time, produces a revolution from north to south; and which the moderns have just begun to discover, without pretending, however, either to mark the era of its commencement, or to trace its progress by any calculation.

This inclination would be only apparent, if it were owing to the heavens, which, by a slow motion, proportioned to the magnitude of the orbs they contain, attract them and the sun towards the pole; but it would be a real one, if our globe, by its natural constitution, verges as it were insensibly to a point, opposite to this secret motion of the heavens. However this may be, by the natural consequence of this inclination, the earth's axis, being constantly declining, it may happen, that what we call the oblique sphere may become a right one, and what was a right sphere, may, in its turn, become an oblique one—that the countries now lying under the equator, might formerly have been under the poles, and what is now the frigid zone, may have before been the torrid.

Hence we may conclude, that this great variation in the position of the whole body of the earth, must produce many particular alterations on its surface. The ocean, which acts as the instrument of all these smaller changes, following the different inclination of the axis, retires from one tract of land, and occupies another, occasioning those inundations or deluges which have successively overflowed the face of the globe, drowned its inhabitants, and every where left visible marks of ruin and devastation, or lasting memorials of their fatal effects in the annals or traditions of mankind.

These perpetual contests between the earth and the ocean, though two elements of opposite natures, are inseparably connected. The earth, by ingulphing the waters in her internal cavities, and the sea, by encroaching upon, and swallowing up large tracts of land, makes the inhabitants of the globe sensible of the danger of their situation, and alarms them with the prospect of their impending fate. The lively recollection of past, naturally,

naturally begets a dread of future changes. Hence the universal traditions concerning deluges in the earlier ages, and the expectation of the future conflagration of the world. The violent agitations which have been felt in every part of the globe, earthquakes occasioned by inundations, or volcanoes produced by those convulsions, raise and cherish dreadful apprehensions in the minds of men. As this terror is the parent of superstition, it has every where received the sanction of its authority: and it is observed to operate most strongly in countries, such as America, where the vestiges of these revolutions of the globe are most remarkable, or most recent.*

Man, once possessed with fear, considers a single calamity as the parent of a thousand others. Earth and heaven seem equally to conspire his ruin: he sees death both above and beneath him: he considers events which accidentally happen at the same juncture, as connected in the nature and the constitution of things: and as most of the transactions on this globe appear under the aspect of some constellations, the stars are accused of having a share in every calamity, the cause of which is unknown; and the mind of man, which has ever been bewildered in its inquiries concerning the origin of evil, has been led to suppose, that certain similar aspects of the planets, however common, have an immediate and necessary influence on all revolutions accompanying or succeeding these appearances.

Political events, in particular, on account of their greater importance to mankind, have ever been considered as more immediately depending on the motion of the stars. Hence those false predictions and terrors, which have in all ages kept the world in awe; terrors, the ori-

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* On the surface of America may be seen still deeper impressions of the ravages which water and fire are constantly making every where. The vast gulfs, immense lakes, numberless islands, great rivers, high mountains, lands seldom inhabited, far less peopled, all these bear witness to the plagues and calamities wherewith nature has afflicted this part of the globe; all of them strike the mind with that dread of annihilation, which superstition has so often made a bad use of, in order to maintain her empire over the world.

gin and progress of which, are entirely owing to the different degrees of ignorance in mankind.

Though Montezuma, as well as many other persons, might possibly have been affected with this disease of the human mind, there is no circumstance that can induce us to impute this prevailing weakness to him. His political conduct, however, was not the wiser on this account. Since this prince had been upon the throne, he no longer had displayed any of those talents that placed him upon it. Passing his life in a state of effeminacy and indolence, he despised his subjects, and oppressed his tributaries. His mind was so debased and corrupted, that even the arrival of the Spaniards could not rouse him into action. He wasted, in negotiations, the time he should have employed in combat, and was desirous of sending away, laden with presents, enemies he ought to have destroyed. Cortez, to whom this supineness was very convenient, omitted nothing that might contribute to encourage it, and always treated with him in the most friendly terms. He declared, that he was sent merely with orders to hold a conference with the powerful emperor of Mexico, on the part of the greatest monarch of the east. Whenever he was pressed to reembark, he always answered, that he had never sent away any of his ambassadors, without giving him an audience. At length the deputies finding him determined, were obliged, according to their instructions, to have recourse to menaces, and spoke in high terms of the opulence and strength of their country. Cortez then turning to his soldiers, told them, *This is exactly what we were in search of; great dangers and great wealth.* He had then completed all his preparatives, and gained every information that was necessary. Resolved, therefore, to conquer or to perish, he set fire to all his ships, and directed his march to the capital of the empire.

In his way, he met with the republic of Tlascala, who had always been enemies to the Mexicans, who wanted to make it subject to their empire. Cortez not doubting that they would favour his projects demanded permission to pass through their empire, and proposed an alliance; both which were refused, for reasons that we never have been able to learn. The surprizing

accounts given of the Spaniards, astonished the inhabitants of Tlascala, but did not dismay them. They fought four or five battles; in one of which the Spanish troops were broken, and in danger of being defeated, had not some dissensions happened in the enemy's army, Cortez was obliged to entrench himself; and the Tlascalans, who wanted nothing but arms to make them victorious, rushed to death upon his breast-works.

Another circumstance which contributed not a little to their defeat, was a certain point of honour dictated by the feelings of common humanity, adopted by the Greeks at the siege of Troy, and by some nations among the Gauls. This was the dread and disgrace of suffering the dead or the wounded to be carried off by the enemy. An attention to this point occasioned a continual confusion in their army, and abated the vigour of their attacks.

The form of government among these people was very singular, and, in many respects, at least, may be proposed as an excellent model. The country was divided into several districts, which were ruled by princes who were styled Caciques. They led their subjects into the field, levied taxes, and administered justice: but their laws and edicts were to have the sanction of the senate of Tlascala, in which the supreme authority resided. This body was composed of citizens, chosen out of each district, by an assembly of the people. The laws and manners of the Tlascalans were extremely severe. Falsehood, filial ingratitude, and the crime against nature, were punished with death. Polygamy was tolerated by law. Their climate led to it, and the government encouraged it.

Military merit here, as in all uncivilized states, or such as aspire to conquest, was in the highest esteem. In their warlike expeditions, they carried in their quivers two arrows, on which were engraven the figures of two of their ancient heroes. They began the engagement by discharging one of these arrows, which it was a point of honour to retrieve. Their dress was different in towns from what it was when they were in the field. They are celebrated for openness and sincerity in their public treaties, and the veneration they paid to old men. Theft,

Theft, adultery, and drunkenness, were held in detestation; and the persons guilty of those crimes were doomed to banishment. No strong liquors were allowed to be drank by any but veterans, exhausted by the fatigues of war.

The Tlascalans had their pleasure-gardens and their baths. They were fond of dancing, poetry, and theatrical amusements. One of their principal divinities was the goddess of love, who had a magnificent temple and the whole nation resorted to the celebration of her festivals.

Their country was not of any great extent, nor was it the most fertile spot in this part of the world. Though mountainous, it was well cultivated, very populous, and very happy.

Such were the people whom the Spaniards disdained to acknowledge of the same species with themselves. One of the qualities of the Tlascalans, which excited their contempt the most, was the love of liberty. They fancied that they had no government, because it was not vested in a single person; no police, because it differed from that of Madrid; no virtues, because they were not of the same religious persuasion; and no understanding, because they did not adopt the same opinions.

National prejudices were, perhaps, never idolized to that degree among any people, as among the Spaniards then, and even at this day. By these prejudices, all their sentiments were dictated, their judgments influenced, and their characters formed. The glowing and manly genius they derived from nature, made them only more ingenious in inventing sophisms to justify their errors. Never was the perversion of human reason maintained in a more dogmatical, determined, obstinate, and artful manner. Nor was their attachment to their customs less violent. They could not allow any people upon earth to be so sensible, intelligent, and virtuous as themselves. This national pride, carried to an excess of infatuation beyond example, would have inclined them to consider Athens in the same contemptuous light as Tlascala. They would have treated the Chinese as brutes, and have every where left marks of outrage, oppression, and devastation.

Notwithstanding this haughty and imperious turn of mind, they made an alliance with the Tlascalans, who furnished them with troops to conduct their march, and support them in their enterprize.

With this reinforcement, Cortez advanced towards the capital city, through a fertile country, watered by fine rivers, and interspersed with towns, woods, cultivated fields, and gardens. The soil produced a variety of plants unknown in Europe. Birds of the most glittering plumage and animals of a new species, appeared in great abundance. Nature only changed her appearance, by assuming a more agreeable and rich dress. The temperature of the air, and the continual heats which were not insupportable, preserved the earth in constant verdure and fertility. Some trees were covered with blossoms, others with delicious fruits; and the same grain was sowing in one field, and reaping in another.

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The Spaniards seemed to be insensible to the beauties of so new a scene. They saw that gold was the common ornament of the houses and temples; that the arms, furniture, and persons of the Mexicans were adorned with the same metal. This alone attracted their notice, like Mammon, whom Milton describes as forgetting the divinity in Heaven itself, and always fixing his eyes upon its golden porches.

Montezuma's wavering disposition, and, perhaps the fear of contaminating his former glory, prevented him from falling upon the Spaniards at their arrival; from joining the Tlascalans, who were braver than he; and, from attacking conquerors, who were fatigued with their own victories. He seemed to have no other plan, than to endeavour to divert Cortez from his design of visiting his capital, and at last determined to introduce him into it himself. He had, under his command, thirty kings or princes, many of whom were in a condition to bring a numerous army into the field. His riches were immense, and his power absolute. It is said, that his subjects

had no small share of understanding, knowledge, industry, and politeness. They were warriors, and had high notions of honour.

Had the emperor of Mexico known how to avail himself of these advantages, his throne would have been immoveable. But this prince, forgetting what he owed to himself, and to his station, did not shew the least instance of courage, or ability; when he might have crushed the Spaniards by the exertion of his whole force, notwithstanding their superiority in discipline and arms, he rather chose to have recourse to perfidy.

While he loaded them with presents, caresses, and every token of respect at Mexico, he gave orders to attack Vera-Cruz, a colony the Spaniards had established with a view of securing their retreat, and of being furnished with supplies. Cortez acquainted his companions with the news, and told them, ‘That it was absolutely necessary to surprize these barbarians with some extraordinary exploit; and that he resolved to seize the emperor, and make himself master of his person.’ His design being approved, he instantly marched with his officers to Montezuma’s palace, and told him he must either follow him, or die. The prince, whose pusillanimity could only be equalled by the rashness of his enemies, resigned himself into their hands. He was obliged to consent to the punishment of the generals, who had acted only in obedience to his orders: and completed his disgrace, by submitting to do homage to the king of Spain.

In the midst of this success, Cortez received advice, that Narvaez was dispatched by the governor of Cuba, with a small army, to deprive him of his command. He marched towards his rival, engaged, and took him prisoner. He ordered the vanquished to lay down their arms, but afterwards restored them, and proposed that they should follow him. He gained their affections, by his openness and magnanimity; the army of Narvaez enlisted under his standard; and he returned to Mexico, where he had left two hundred men to guard the emperor.

Commotions were excited among the nobility of Mexico, who deeply resented the captivity of their prince;

prince ; and the indiscreet zeal of the Spaniards having prompted them to disturb a public festival, celebrated in honour of the deities of the country, by destroying their altars, and making a massacre of the worshippers and priests, had provoked the people to take up arms. The only mark of barbarism among the Mexicans, was their superstition: their priests, however, who were a disgrace to humanity, made a most scandalous abuse of that abominable worship, which they had imposed upon the credulity of the people. This government, like all other civilized nations, acknowledged a supreme being, and a future state of rewards and punishments: but these useful doctrines were disgraced by a mixture of absurdity, which rendered them altogether incredible.

The religious system of the Mexicans taught them to expect the final catastrophe of the world, at the conclusion of every century: and that year was distinguished throughout the whole empire, by every mark of grief and consternation. The Mexicans invoked inferior powers, in the same manner as other nations have invoked Genii, Camis, Manitous, Angels, and Fetiches. The lowest deities in this class had all their temples, images, employments, and distinct authority assigned them, together with the power of working miracles. They had their holy water to sprinkle the people; and the emperor drink of it. Pilgrimages, processions, and donations to the priests, were esteemed acts of piety; and they were no strangers to expiations, penances, mortifications, and abstinence. They had some superstitious observances peculiar to themselves. A slave was annually chosen, and shut up in the temple; to him they paid adoration, offered incense, invoked him as a deity, and concluded the scene, by cutting his throat with great solemnity. Another piece of superstition, of which no traces are to be found in any other country, was this: On certain days, the priests made a statue of paste, which they sent to the oven: they placed it upon an altar, where it became a divinity. Upon this day, innumerable crowds of people flocked to the temple. The priests cut the statue in pieces, and distributed a portion of it to all the persons in the assembly, who

ate it, and thought they were sanctified by swallowing their god.

It was certainly more eligible to eat gods than men; and yet the Mexicans sacrificed their prisoners of war, in the temple of the god of battles. The priests afterwards ate them, and sent portions to the emperor, and the principal lords of the realm. When peace had lasted some time, they took care to have it insinuated to the emperor, that the gods were perishing with hunger: and war was commenced with no other view than to make prisoners. Such a system of religion was, in every view, odious and terrible; and all its ceremonies were of a dismal and sanguinary cast. They kept mankind perpetually in awe, were calculated to make the people cruel, and to give the priests an unlimited authority. These barbarous absurdities, though they might justly excite the detestation of the Spaniards, could not justify their attempts, to suppress them by the greatest cruelties. They could not justify them in attacking and murdering a people assembled in the principal temple of the capital; or in assassinating the nobles, in order to seize upon their possessions.

On his return to Mexico, Cortez found the Spaniards besieged in the place where he had left them to guard the emperor. It was not without difficulty, that he opened a passage to join them; and when he was at their head, he was obliged to sustain many powerful attacks. The Mexicans gave proofs of extraordinary courage. They cheerfully devoted themselves to certain death. Naked and ill armed, they threw themselves into the ranks of the Spaniards, with a view of making their arms useless, or wresting them out of their hands. Several attempted to enter Cortez's palace by the embrasures, where the cannon were placed: and there was not a man, who would not have courted death, to procure the deliverance of his country from the tyranny of these foreign usurpers. Cortez having taken possession of a temple, which was an advantageous post, was viewing, from a platform, the engagement in which the Indians fought desperately for the recovery of their lost liberty, when two young Mexican noblemen threw away their arms, and came over to him as deserters.

Placing

Placing one knee on the ground in a suppliant posture, they seized him, and threw themselves from the platform, in hopes of making him perish, by dragging him along with them. Cortez disengaged himself, and kept his station on the balustrade; but the two Mexicans died victims of this noble and unfortunate enterprize.

This, and some other exploits which shewed equal spirit, made the Spaniards desirous of coming to terms of accommodation. Montezuma consents to become the instrument of his people's slavery, and appeared upon the rampart to persuade his subjects to retire. Their resentment convinced him that his reign was at an end; and he was mortally wounded by a shower of arrows they discharged at him.

The successor to this base monarch was of a haughty and intrepid disposition. He united judgment with readiness of conception. He knew how to retrieve his affairs, and to defend himself in circumstances of danger. His sagacity discovered to him the difficulty of gaining any advantage over an enemy so superior in their weapons, by vigorous attacks; and he thought it the best expedient to reduce them by famine. Cortez no sooner perceived this change of measures, than he thought of securing a retreat into the country of Tlascala.

The execution of this project required great dispatch, impenetrable secrecy, and well-concerted measures. The march was begun in the middle of the night; the army was silently filing off along a bank, when it was found, that its motions had been observed with a spirit of disguise of which they were thought incapable; his rearguard was vigourously attacked by a numerous body, and the flanks by canoes distributed on each side of the causeway. If the Mexicans, who had more troops than they could bring into action, had taken the precaution to place a part of them at the extremity of this causeway, or even to break it, all the Spaniards would inevitably have perished in this bloody engagement. Fortunately for them, the enemy knew not how to avail himself of all his advantages, and they at length reached the borders of the lake, after having undergone incredible dangers and fatigues. The confusion they were

in still exposed them to a total defeat, when they were relieved from this danger, by a fresh error of the enemy.

No sooner had the morning discovered to the Mexicans the field of battle of which they were masters, than they perceived among the slain two of Montezuma's sons, whom the Spaniards were carrying off with several other prisoners. This sight chilled them with horror. The idea of having massacred the children, after having sacrificed the father, was too strong for men, enfeebled and enervated by a habit of blind obedience. They were afraid of adding impiety to regicide; and employed, in idle funeral rites, the time they owed to the preservation of their country.

In the mean time the beaten army, which had lost two hundred Spaniards, a thousand Tlascalans, the best part of their artillery, and which had scarce a soldier remaining that was not wounded, was continuing its march. The enemy soon pursued, harassed, and at length surrounded them in the valley of Otumba. The cannonade, and the firing of the small arms, the pikes and swords, did not prevent the Indians, naked as they were, from advancing, and charging their enemies with great violence. Courage was just upon the point of yielding to numbers, when Cortez decided the fortune of the day. He had been informed, that in this part of the new world, the fate of the battle depended upon the royal standard. These colours, the form of which was remarkable, and which were never brought into the field but on the most important occasions, were at no great distance from him. He immediately rushed forward, with the bravest of his companions, to take it from the enemy. One of them seized and carried it into the Spanish ranks. The Mexicans immediately lost all courage; and, throwing down their arms, betook themselves to flight. Cortez pursued his march, and arrived in the country of Tlascala without opposition.

Cortez did not relinquish either the design or the hopes of subduing the empire of Mexico; but he adopted a new plan; and purposed to make one part of the inhabitants assist him in the reduction of the other. The form of government in Mexico, the disposition of

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the people, and its situation, favoured his project, and facilitated the execution of it.

The empire was elective, and certain princes or caiques were the electors. They usually chose one of their own body. He was obliged to take an oath, that so long as he filled the throne, the rains should fall in due season, the rivers cause no inundations, the fields be exempt from sterility, and that mankind should not be destroyed by the malignant effects of an infectious air. This custom may have some reference to a theocratical government, the traces of which are still to be found among almost all the nations in the world. It might likewise probably be the intention of this whimsical oath, to intimate to a new sovereign, that, as the misfortunes of a state almost always arise from bad management, his government ought to be conducted with such moderation and wisdom, that public calamities might never be considered as the consequences of his imprudence, or as the just punishment of his licentiousness.

According to the admirable tenor of their laws, merit was the only title to the crown : superstition, however, gave the priests a considerable influence in their elections. On his accession to the throne, the emperor was obliged to make war, and to offer the prisoners to the gods. This prince, though elective, had an absolute authority, as there were no written laws ; and he was at liberty to make what alterations he pleased in the old customs*.

Almost all the forms of justice, and ceremonies of the court, had the sanction of religion. The same crimes that are punished in all other places, were punishable by the laws ; but the criminals were often saved by the interposition of the priests. There were two laws which had a tendency to destroy the innocent, and to make the Mexicans bend under the double yoke of tyranny and superstition. By these laws, persons offending against

* There were Councils of finance, war, trade, and law ; and the several courts, established throughout the different provinces, were under the jurisdiction of these Councils. There were also a sort of Judges, nearly resembling our Provofts, who gave judgment between parties upon the spot, from which, however, there lay an appeal to the proper court.

against the sanctity of religion, or the majesty of the prince, were condemned to death. It is easy to discern how much laws of so little precision might afford opportunities of gratifying private revenge, or of promoting the interested views of priests and courtiers. Bravery, piety, and perseverance, were the steps by which private men obtained the rank of nobility, and by which the nobility rose to posts of honour. In the temples, more painful initiation was prescribed than in the army; and the nobles who had undergone such hardships to obtain their distinctions, submitted to the meanest employments in the palace of the emperors.

Among the great numbers of vassals in Mexico, Cortez concluded there might be some who would be ready to shake off the yoke, and join the Spaniards. He has remarked, that the Mexicans were held in great detestation by the petty states that were subject to the empire and that the emperors exercised their authority with extreme severity. He had likewise observed, that the provinces in general disliked the religion of the metropolis; and that, even in Mexico, the nobility and persons of fortune, whose intercourse with the people had abated the force of their prejudices, and softened their manners, had lost their attachment to this mode of religion; and that many of the nobility disliked the performance of the low services exacted of them by their masters.

Having received some small reinforcements from the Spaniards, obtained some troops from the republic of Tlaxcala, and formed some new alliances, Cortez bent his course once more towards the capital of the empire.

Mexico was situated on an island in the middle of a large lake. If the Spaniards may be credited, this city contained twenty thousand houses; the inhabitants were very numerous, and the buildings magnificent. The emperor's palace, which was built with marble and jasper, was of a prodigious extent. Its fountains, baths, ornaments, and statues, representing animals, were universally admired. It was full of pictures, which, though made of feathers, were finely coloured, brilliant, and natural. Most of the caciques, as well as the emperor, had their menageries replenished with all the animals of the new continent; and apartments for the arrangement of

of natural curiosities. Their gardens were filled with plants of all kinds. The embellishments of nature, and whatever is rare or glittering in her productions, must be an object of luxury to an opulent people, where nature is beautiful, and the arts are not brought to perfection. The temples, which were numerous, were in general magnificent; but polluted with blood, and hung round with the heads of the unhappy victims who had been sacrificed. One of the greatest ornaments of Mexico, was a square, to which more than a hundred thousand persons usually resorted: it was covered with tents, and shops, where the merchants exposed to view all the riches of the country, and the manufactures of the Mexicans; birds of every colour, brilliant shells, a profusion of flowers, together with pieces of workmanship in gold and enamel, gave these markets a more splendid and beautiful appearance to the eye, than is to be met with in the richest fair of Europe. One hundred thousand canoes were constantly passing and repassing between the city and the borders of the lake; which were ornamented with more than fifty cities, and a multitude of towns and villages. Upon this lake were three causeways of considerable length, which were master-pieces of Mexican industry. When we consider that these people were of no very remote antiquity; that they had no intercourse with any enlightened nation, no iron, writing, or any of those arts which assist us in the knowledge and exercise of others; and that they lived in a climate where the invention of man is not excited by necessity; we must acknowledge them to be one of the most ingenious people in the world.

The falsity of this pompous description may easily be made evident to every man's capacity. It is not, however, merely by contrasting the present state of Mexico, with that in which its conquerors pretend to have found it, that this point can be decided. The ravages occasioned by destructive tyranny, and a long continued series of oppressions, are sufficiently known. But if we compare the different accounts of the Spaniards, we shall then be able to judge of the credibility they deserve. When they wish to imprint a great idea of their courage and success, they represent the empire they have

have subdued, as a formidable, rich, and civilized kingdom. If, on the contrary, they mean to justify their cruelties, no people were ever so base, so corrupt, or so barbarous.

Were it possible to form a proper judgment of a people that exists no more, it might possibly be said, that the Mexicans were subject to a despotism, as cruel as it was ill concerted; that they rather conceived the necessity of having regular tribunals of justice, than that they felt the advantages of them; that the small number of arts they followed, were as defective in execution as they were rich in materials; that they were farther distant from a savage, than they were near to a civilized people; and that fear, the chief spring of all arbitrary governments, served them instead of morality and principles.

Cortez began, by gaining over to his interest the caciques who reigned in the cities that were situated on the borders of the lake. Some of them joined the Spaniards with their forces; others were reduced to submission. Cortez took possession of the three causeways that lead to Mexico. He wanted to make himself master of the navigation of the lake; he built some brigantines which he armed with a part of his artillery; and, in this posture, waited till the want of provisions should produce a surrender of the empire of the new world.

Guatimozin exerted his utmost efforts to relieve the capital. His subjects fought with as much fury as ever. The Spaniards, however, maintained their posts, and pushed their attacks into the heart of the city. The Mexicans, fearing it would be taken, and perceiving that there must soon be a total want of provisions, turned their attention to the preservation of their emperor. He consented to attempt his escape, with a view of carrying on the war in the northern part of his dominions. To facilitate his retreat, a party of his soldiers generously devoted themselves to death, by diverting the attention of the besiegers: but the canoe, in which this brave and unfortunate monarch had embarked, was taken by a brigantine. An officer of the Spanish revenue, suspecting that he had treasures concealed, ordered him

him to be extended upon red hot coals, to extort a confession. His favourite, who underwent the same torture, complaining to him of his sufferings, the emperor said, *Am I upon a bed of roses?* An expression equal to any of those which history has recorded as worthy the admiration of mankind: An expression which the Mexicans shall one day repeat to their children, when the period shall arrive, in which the Spaniards shall expiate the cruelties they have exercised, and that race of destroyers be plunged into the sea, or drowned in their own blood. These people may perhaps preserve the actions of their martyrs, and the history of their persecutions. In these it will be recorded, that Guatimozin was dragged half dead from a bed of fire; and that, three years after, he was publicly hanged, under pretence of his having conspired against his oppressors and executioners.

IN despotic governments, the fall of the prince, and the reduction of the capital, usually bring on the conquest and subjection of the whole realm. The people cannot preserve their attachment to an oppressive government, or to a tyrant who thinks to make himself more respectable, by never appearing in public. Accustomed to acknowledge no right but that of force, they never fail to submit to the strongest party. This was the case in the revolution of Mexico. All the provinces submitted, without resistance to the victor, who gave the name of new Spain to this empire, the frontiers of which were still extended, though already five hundred leagues long, and two hundred in breadth*.

The conquerors immediately added to their acquisitions the vast tract which lies to the southward; and extends

The Spaniards being masters of Mexico, extend its boundaries.

* As they consisted of one body of people, and were natives of a very barbarous country, they have been successful in conquering, in their turn, savages born under a milder climate, who do not live in a state of society, or rather consist of several small societies. Their empire fell entirely into the hands of the Spaniards, with which, however, their ambition could not be satisfied.

extends from Guatimala to the gulph of Darien. This accession of territory, though acquired without much loss of time, blood, or treasure, was of little importance. The provinces of which it consists are hardly known, and inhabited only by a few Spaniards, who in general are poor, and have, by their tyranny, compelled the Indians to retire into the mountains, and impenetrable forests. Among all these savages, the Mosquitos are the only people who retain a form of a nation. Having for a long time struggled to preserve the fertile plains they inhabited in the country of Nicaragua, they took refuge among the barren rocks at the cape of Gracias à Dios. Defended on the inland side by impassable morasses, and on that of the sea by dangerous shoals, they defy the rancour of their enemies. Their intercourse with the English and French pirates, whom they have frequently accompanied in the most dangerous enterprizes, has inflamed their hatred against their persecutors, increased their natural audacity, and taught them the use of fire-arms: but their numbers, which were never considerable, have been continually on the decline. As they do not at present exceed two thousand men, their weakness puts it out of their power to give the least alarm.

The increased extent of new Spain, towards the north, is more considerable, and may prove of much more importance. We have hitherto been speaking only of New Mexico, which was discovered in 1553, and conquered in the beginning of the last century: it revolted about the middle of it, and was soon after reduced to subjection. All that we know concerning this vast province is, that the Spaniards have settled a few wandering savages there, introduced a little agriculture, worked some rich mines imperfectly, and established a settlement called Santa-Fé. The conquest of this inland territory would have been productive of much greater advantages to the maritime parts, if, during the hundred years since it was undertaken, it had been prosecuted with the attention it deserved.

The old empire of Mexico, extended almost to the entrance of the Vermillion bay. From these limits, to the place where the continent is united to California, is

a gulph

a gulph near twenty degrees in length. Its breadth is sometimes sixty, and sometimes fifty leagues, seldom less than forty. In this extent there are many sand-banks, and a considerable number of islands; and the coast is inhabited by several savage nations, which are for the most part enemies. The Spaniards have here formed certain scattered colonies, to which, agreeably to their custom, they have given the name of provinces. Their missionaries have carried their discoveries farther; and flattered themselves, that they should procure to their country greater riches than it had ever acquired from its most celebrated possessions.

Several causes have for a long time combined to render their labours ineffectual. No sooner had they got together, and civilized some of the savages, than they were carried off to be employed in the mines. This barbarity ruined the rising settlements, and prevented other Indians from incorporating with them. The Spaniards, too remote from the inspection of government, gave themselves up to the most atrocious and unheard-of crimes. Quicksilver, stuffs, and other merchandize, were carried thither from Vera-Cruz, on mules, through a difficult and dangerous way of six or seven hundred leagues; a circumstance, which, at the end of the journey, added so considerably to their value, that most of the persons concerned in the working of the mines, were obliged to abandon them, from the impossibility of supporting them. At last, certain clans of savages, stimulated either by ferocity, or the well-grounded apprehension of being one day enslaved, unexpectedly fell on the workmen, who still obstinately persisted in struggling against so many difficulties.

It was hoped, that a new arrangement of things would take place, when, in 1746, by order of government, the jesuit Ferdinand Conig had sailed through the whole gulf of California. This voyage, executed with the utmost care, and with great judgment, instructed the Spaniards in every thing that was of importance for them to know. They became acquainted with the coasts of this continent, the harbours which nature has opened there, the sandy and dry places which are not susceptible of cultivation, and, the rivers, which, by the fertili-

ty they produce on their banks, point out the proper stations for the formation of colonies. Nothing in future could hinder the vessels coming from Acapulco from entering into the Vermillion sea, carrying, at a moderate expence, into the bordering provinces, missionaries, soldiers, miners, provisions, merchandize, and every thing necessary to colonies, and returning laden with metals. The imagination of the Spaniards went still farther. They already saw the whole continent subdued as far as New Mexico, and a new empire rise, as extensive and as opulent as the old, and which would surpass the former in the mildness and salubrity of its climate.

These hopes were far from being chimerical; but, in order to have them realized, it was necessary, either to gain the affections of the natives by acts of humanity, or to subdue them by force of arms. The destroyers of the new world could never form an idea of employing the first of these expedients; and they were not in a condition of putting the second in practice before the year 1768.

Their endeavours have not been crowned with complete success. They advanced with considerable rapidity in Mexico, and in every region which was populous, or whose inhabitants were collected within a small compass. Countries less inhabited were not so soon reduced, because there was a necessity of finding men to subdue, and because they fled into the forests whenever the Spaniards appeared, and did not become visible till want of subsistence had obliged them to retire. Thus, it was not till after three years hunting, toil, and cruelty, that they completed the conquest of the Seris, Planos, and Sobaiporis. Their neighbours, the Papagos, Nijoras, and Sobas, despairing of being able to defend their liberty, submitted to the yoke without resistance. Troops were still employed, in 1771, in pursuing the Apaches, the most warlike of these nations, and who had the greatest passion for independency. They despair of subjecting them; but they labour to exterminate them, at least to drive them at a distance from New Biscay, which would be exposed to their incursions.

The wealth which they have lately found in the provinces

vinces of Sonora and Cinaloa, which form what is now called the New Andalusia, appears greatly to exceed every thing that has been seen in any other place. There is a gold mine fourteen leagues in extent; which, at the depth of two feet, offers immense treasures. Of the silver mines, one produces eight marks per quintal of ore; and the stones which they draw out of the other are almost entirely composed of virgin silver. If the court of Madrid, which has just published these discoveries, hath not been deceived; if the mines, which are often near the surface of the earth, and have an inconsiderable depth, do not present them with delusive hopes, the unhappy savages, who have very lately been subjected, will be all burried alive in the bowels of the earth.

NEW SPAIN is almost entirely situated within the torrid zone. The air is excessively warm, moist, and unwholesome on the coasts of the north sea. These defects of Climate, soil, and population of Mexico, the climate are infinitely less felt on the coasts of the South sea, and hardly at all in the inland country, which is intersected by a chain of mountains, that are supposed to be a continuation of the Cordilleras.

The quality of the soil has the same variations. The eastern part is low, marshy, overflowed in the rainy seasons, covered with impenetrable forests, and totally uncultivated. It may be imagined, that if the Spaniards leave it in this state of desolation, it is because they judged that a desert and destructive frontier would furnish a better defence against an enemy's fleet, than they could ever expect, either from fortifications or troops, the maintenance of which would cost immense sums, or from the natives of the country, who are effeminate, and little attached to the government of their conquerors. The western territory is higher, of a better quality, containing many fields, and several houses. In the low lands there are districts on which nature has been very liberal; but, like every country situated under the tropics, they abound more in fruits than in corn.

The population of this vast empire is not less various than its soil. Its most distinguished inhabitants are the Spaniards, sent by the court to fill the places of government. They are obliged, like those in the metropolis, who aspire to any ecclesiastical, civil, or military employments, to prove, that they have been neither heretics, Jews, Mohammedans, nor persons who have had any contests with the inquisition, in their family, for four generations. Merchants who want to go to Mexico, as well as to other parts of America, without becoming colonists, are bound by the same forms. They are also obliged to swear, that they have three hundred palms of merchandise, their own property, in the fleet in which they embark ; and that they will not carry their wives with them. On these absurd conditions, they become the principal agents of the European commerce with the Indies. Though their charter is only to continue three years, and a little longer for countries more remote, it is of great importance. To them alone belongs the right of selling, as commissioners, the greater part of the cargo. If these laws were observed, the merchants, stationed in the new world, would be confined to dispose of what they have received on their own account.

The predilection which administration has for Spaniards born in Europe, has reduced the Spanish Creoles to acquiesce in subordinate stations. The descendants of the companions of Cortez, and of those who came after them, being constantly excluded from all places of honour, or of administration, that were any way considerable, have seen the gradual decay of the power that supported their fathers. Accustomed to that unjust contempt with which they have been treated, they have at last become really contemptible. They have totally lost, in the vices which originate from indolence, from the heat of the climate, and from a superfluous enjoyment of all things, that firmness, and that sort of pride, which hath ever characterised their nation. A barbarous luxury, shameful pleasures, and romantic intrigues, have enervated all the vigour of their minds, and superstition hath completed the ruin of their virtues. Blindly devoted to priests, too ignorant to enlighten them by their instructions, too depraved to edify them by their example,

ple, and too mercenary to attend to both these duties of their function, they have no attachment to any part of religion, but that which enfeebles the mind, and have neglected what might have contributed to rectify their morals.

The Mestees, or mongrels, who constitute the third order of citizens, are held in still greater contempt. It is well known, that the court of Madrid, in order to replenish a part of the dreadful vacancy which the avarice and cruelty of the conquerors had occasioned, and to regain the confidence of those who had escaped their fury, encouraged, as much as possible, the marriage of Spaniards with Indian women. These marriages, which became pretty common throughout all America, were particularly frequent in Mexico, where the women had more understanding, and were more agreeable, than in other places. The Creoles degraded this mixed progeny, as much as they had been degraded by the Europeans. Their condition, equivocal at first, in process of time, was at last fixed between the whites and the blacks.

These blacks are not very numerous in New Spain. As the natives are more intelligent, more robust, and more industrious than those of the other colonies, they have hardly introduced any Africans, except such as were required, either to indulge the caprice, or perform the domestic service of rich people. These slaves, who are much beloved by their masters, on whom they absolutely depend, who purchase them at an extravagant price, and who make them the ministers of their pleasures, take advantage of the high favour they enjoy, to oppress the Mexicans. They assume over these men, who are called free, an ascendant which keeps up an implacable hatred between the two nations. The law has studied to encourage this aversion, by taking effectual measures to prevent all connection between them. Negroes are prohibited from having any amorous correspondence with the Indians; the men, on pain of being mutilated; the women, of being severely punished. On all these accounts, the Africans, who, in other settlements, are enemies to Europeans, are, in the Spanish Indies, their warm friends.

Authority has no need of this support, at least in Mexico, where population is no longer what it was formerly. The first historians, and those who copied them, have recorded, that the Spaniards found there ten millions of souls. This was the exaggerated account of conquerors, to exalt the magnificence of their triumph; and it was adopted, without examination, with so much the more readiness, as it rendered them more odious. We need only follow, with attention, those ruffians who at first laid waste these fine countries, in order to be convinced, that they had not succeeded in multiplying men at Mexico, and the adjacent parts, but by depopulating the centre of the empire; and that the provinces, which are remote from the capital, differed in nothing from the other deserts of South and North America. It is making a great concession to allow, that the population of Mexico has only been exaggerated one half; for it does not now exceed one million.

It is generally believed, that the first conquerors massacred the Indians out of wantonness; and that the priests themselves incited them to acts of ferocity. Undoubtedly these inhuman soldiers frequently shed blood without even an apparent motive; and it is certain their fanatic milhonaries did not oppose these barbarities as they ought to have done. But this was not the real cause, the principal source of the depopulation of Mexico; it was the work of a slow tyranny, and of that avarice, which exacted from its wretched inhabitants more rigorous toil than was compatible with their constitution and the climate.

This oppression was coeval with conquest. All the lands were divided between the crown, the companions of Cortez, and the grandees or ministers who were most in faveur at the court of Spain. The Mexicans, appointed to the royal domains, were destined to public labours, which originally were considerable. The lot of those who were employed on the estates of individuals was still more wretched. All groaned under a dreadful yoke; they were fed very indifferently; they had no wages given them, and services were required of them, under which the most robust men would have sunk.

Their

Their misfortunes excited the compassion of Bartholomew de Las Casas.

This man, so famous in the annals of the new world, had accompanied his father in the first voyage of Columbus. The mildness and simplicity of the Indians struck him to such a degree, that he made himself an ecclesiastic, in order to devote his labours to their conversion. But this soon became the least of his attentions. As he was more a *man* than a *priest*, he felt more for the cruelties exercised against them, than for their superstitions. He was continually hurrying from one hemisphere to the other, in order to comfort the people to whom he was attached, or to soften their tyrants. This conduct, which made him be idolized by the one, and dreaded by the other, had not the success he expected. The hope of keeping them in awe, by a character revered among the Spaniards, determined him to accept the bishopric of Chiapa in Mexico. When he was convinced, that this dignity was an insufficient barrier against that avarice and cruelty which he endeavoured to check, he abdicated it. It was then that this courageous, firm, disinterested man, cited his country to the tribunal of the whole universe. In his treatise of the tyranny of the Spaniards in America, he accuses them of having destroyed fifteen millions of Indians. They ventured to find fault with the acrimony of his style, but no one convicted him of exaggeration. His writings, which indicate the amiable turn of his disposition, and the sublimity of his sentiments, have branded his barbarous countrymen with a disgrace, which time hath not, and never will efface.

The court of Madrid, awakened by the representations of the virtuous Las Casas, and by the indignation of the whole world, became sensible, at last, that the tyranny it permitted was repugnant to religion, to humanity, and to policy, and resolved to break the chains of the Mexicans. Their liberty was now only constrained by the sole condition, that they should not quit the territory where they were settled. This precaution owed its origin to the fear that was entertained of their going to join the wandering savages to the north and south of the empire,

With their liberty, they ought to have restored them their lands; but this was not done. This injustice obliged them to work solely for their oppressors. It was only decreed, that the Spaniards, in whose service they laboured, should stipulate to keep them well, and pay them to the amount of 120 livres * a-year.

From these profits, the tribute imposed by government was substracted, together with an hundred sous † for an institution, which it is astonishing the conquerors should have thought of establishing. This was a fund set apart in each community, and appropriated to the relief of such Indians as were decayed or indisposed, and to their support under private or public calamities.

The distribution of this fund was committed to their caciques. These were not the descendants of those whom they found in the country at the time of the conquest. The Spaniards chose them from among those Indians who appeared the most attached to their interests; and were under no apprehensions at making these dignities hereditary. Their authority was limited to the supporting the police in their district, which, in general, extended eight or ten leagues; to the receiving the tribute of those Indians who toiled on their account, that of the others being stopped by the masters to whom they were subjected; and to the preventing their flight, by keeping them always under their inspection, and the not suffering them to contract any engagement without their consent. As a reward of their services, these magistrates obtained from government a property. They were allowed to take out of the common stock five sous † annually, for every Indian under their jurisdiction. At last, they were empowered to get their fields cultivated, by such young men as were not yet subject to the poll-tax; and to employ girls, till the time of their marriage, in such occupations as were adapted to their sex, without allowing them any salary, except their maintenance.

These institutions, which totally changed the condition of the Indians of Mexico, irritated the Spaniards to a degree not to be conceived. Their pride would not suffer them to consider the Americans as free men;

nor

* About 5l. 5s. + 4s. 4½d. † 2½d.

nor would their avarice permit them to pay for labour, which hitherto had cost them nothing. They employed successively, or in combination, craft, remonstrances, and violence, to effect the subversion of an arrangement which so strongly contradicted their warmest passions ; but their efforts were ineffectual. Las Casas had raised up, for his beloved Indians, protectors who seconded his design with zeal and warmth. The Mexicans themselves, finding a support, cited their oppressors before the tribunals, and even before those that were either weak or corrupted by the court. They carried their resolution so far, as even unanimously to refuse to work for those who had treated any of their countrymen with injustice. This mutual agreement, more than any other circumstance, gave solidity to the regulations which had been made. The order prescribed by the laws was gradually established. There was no longer any regular system of oppression ; there only remained some of those particular grievances which a vanquished people, who have lost their government, can hardly avoid from those who have subdued them.

These clandestine acts of injustice did not prevent the Mexicans from recovering, from time to time, certain detached portions of that immense territory of which their fathers had been despoiled. They purchased them of the royal domain, or of the great proprietors. It was not their labour which enabled them to make these acquisitions : for this they were indebted to the felicity of having discovered, some of them mines, others treasures, which had been concealed at the time of the conquest. The greatest number derived their resources from the priests and monks, to whom they were indebted for existence.

Even those, who experienced a fortune less propitious, procured for themselves, by the sole profits of their salaries, several conveniences which they did not enjoy before they underwent a foreign yoke. We should be very much deceived, if we judged of the ancient prosperity of the inhabitants of Mexico, by what has been said of its emperor, its court, its capital, and the governors of its provinces. Despotism had there produced those fatal effects which it produces every where. The whole state

state was sacrificed to the caprices, pleasures, and magnificence of a small number of persons.

The government drew considerable advantages from the mines which it caused to be worked, and still greater from those which were in the hands of individuals. The salt works greatly added to its revenue. Those who followed agriculture, at the time of harvest, paid in kind a third of all the produce of the lands, whether they belonged to them as their own property, or whether they were only the farmers of them. Hunters, fishermen, potters, and all mechanics, paid the same proportion of their industry every month. Even the poor were taxed at certain fixed contributions, which their labour, or their alms, might enable them to pay.

The common people among the Mexicans went naked. The emperor himself, and the nobles, were only covered with a kind of mantle, composed of a piece of square cotton tied on the right shoulder. Instead of shoes, they wore sandals. Women among the common people, for their whole apparel, had only a kind of shift with half sleeves, which fell on their knees, and was open on the bosom. Common people were prohibited from raising their houses above the ground floor, and from having either doors or windows. The greatest part were built of earth, and covered with boards, and they were equally destitute of conveniency as of elegance. The inside was covered with mats, and lighted with torches of fir-wood, tho' they had wax and oil in abundance. Their beds were made of plain straw and coverlets of cotton. For their seats, they had only little sacks of palm-leaves; but it was their custom to sit on the ground, and even to eat in that posture. Their food, of which animal meat was seldom a part, had little diversity, and little delicacy. Their most ordinary aliment was maize made into a paste, or prepared with various seasonings. With these they joined the common herbs found in the field, which were not too hard, or had not a bad smell. Cocoa diluted in warm water, or seasoned with honey or pimento, was their best beverage. They had, besides these, other liquors, but not of an intoxicating quality; for all strong drinks were so rigidly prohibited, that no one could use them, without a par-

a particular permission from government, which was granted only to the sick and aged. It was on certain solemnities alone, and in public labours, that each person had a quantity allowed in proportion to his age. Drunkenness was considered as the most scandalous of vices. Those who were found in this situation were shaved in public, and their houses were pulled down. If they exercised any public office, they were deprived of it, and declared incapable of ever holding it again.

It is astonishing, that men who had so few wants should ever submit to the yoke of slavery. That the citizen, accustomed to the indulgencies and conveniences of life, should purchase them every day with the sacrifice of his liberty, is not the least surprising; but that people, to whom nature offers more felicity than the social chain that unites them, should calmly submit to slavery, and never think, that there is frequently but together inconceivable, if we did not know how much habit and superstition render men insensible to the feelings of nature.

The Mexicans are now less unhappy. Our fruits, our corn, and our cattle, have rendered their food more wholesome, agreeable, and abundant. Their houses are better built, better disposed, and better furnished. Shoes, drawers, shirts, a garment of wool or cotton, a ruff, and a hat, constitute their dress. The dignity which they have agreed to annex to these enjoyments, has made them better economists, and more laborious. This ease, however, is far from universal; it is even very uncommon in the vicinity of the mines, towns, and great roads, where tyranny seldom sleeps; but we often find it with pleasure in remote parts, where the Spaniards have not become numerous, and where they have, in some measure, become Mexicans.

The inhabitants of the province of Chiapa are distinguished beyond all others. They owe their superiority to the advantage of having had Las Cafas for their teacher, who originally prevented them from being oppressed. They surpass their countrymen in size, genius, and strength. Their language has a peculiar softness and elegance.

elegance. Their territory, without being a better soil than the rest, is infinitely richer in all sorts of productions. They are painters, musicians, and dexterous in all arts. They particularly excel in fabricating those works, pictures, and stuffs of feathers, which have never been imitated elsewhere. Their principal town is called Chiaapa dos Indos. It is only inhabited by the natives of the country, who form a community consisting of four thousand families, among which are found many of the Indian nobility. The great river, on which this town is situated, is a scene on which the inhabitants continually display their dexterity and their courage. They form naval armies with their boats. They engage, attack, and defend themselves with surprising agility. They excel no less in the chase of bulls, cudgelling, dancing, and all bodily exercises. They build towns and castles of wood, which they cover with oil cloth, and which they besiege in form. In short, theatrical representations constitute one of their ordinary amusements. From these particulars, we see what the Mexicans are capable of, if they had been fortunate enough to have passed under the dominion of a conqueror, who had possessed moderation and good sense enough to relax the chains of their servitude, instead of riveting them.

Produc- THE employments of this people are very
tions of various. The most intelligent, and those who
Mexico. are in easy circumstances, devote themselves
to the manufactures of indispensable necessity,
which are dispersed through the whole empire. The
most beautiful are fabricated among the people of Tlascala.
Their old capital and the new one, which is called Angelos, are the centre of this industry. Here
they manufacture cloth that is pretty fine, callicoes that
have an agreeable appearance, certain slight silks, good
hats, gold lace, embroidery, lace, glafies, and a great
deal of hardware. The arts must necessarily have made
a greater progress in a province which hath been able to
preserve its independence a long time, which the Spani-
ards thought it prudent to treat with some management

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after the conquest, and which had always shown superior abilities; whether owing to its climate or its government. To these advantages is joined that of its situation. All the inhabitants of Mexico, who must necessarily pass over its territory when they go to purchase the European merchandise that is landed at Vera-Cruz, have found it convenient to take up on the road what the fleet did not supply them with, or what was sold too dear.

The care of flocks affords some maintenance to some Mexicans, whom fortune or nature have not called to more distinguished employments. America, at the time it was discovered, had neither hogs, sheep, oxen, horses, nor even any domestic animal. Columbus carried some of these useful animals to San-Domingo, from whence they were generally dispersed, and at Mexico more than in any other place. These have multiplied prodigiously. They count their horned cattle by thousands, whose skins are become an object of considerable exportation. The horses are degenerated; but the quality is compensated by the number. Hog's lard is here substituted for butter. Sheep's wool is here dry, coarse, and bad, as it is every where between the tropics.

The vine and olive tree have experienced the same degeneracy. The cultivation of them was at first prohibited, with a view of leaving a free market for the commodities of the metropolis. In 1706, permission was given to the Jesuits, and a little afterwards to the Marquis Del Valle, a descendant from Cortez, to cultivate them. The experiments have not proved successful. The trials, indeed, that have been made, have not been abandoned; but nobody has solicited the liberty of following an example, which did not flatter them with any great emoluments. Other cultures have been more successful. Cotton, sugar, silk, cocoa, tobacco, and European corn, have all thriven more or less. Labour is encouraged by the happy circumstance which befel the Spaniards of discovering iron mines, which were entirely unknown to the Mexicans; as also, mines of copper, that is hard enough to serve for tools of agriculture. But all these articles, for want of hands or activity, are confined to an interior circulation. There is only the

vanilla,

vanilla, indigo, and cochineal, which belong to the trade of Mexico with other nations.

The vanilla is a plant, which, like ivy, grows to the trees it meets with, embraces them closely, and raises itself by their aid. Its stem is but very small in diameter, and is not quite round. Though it is very pliable, it is yet pretty hard. Its bark is thin, very adherent, and of a green colour. It is intersected, like the vine, with knots which are at the distance of six or seven inches from each other. From these knots issue leaves resembling those of the laurel, but longer, larger, thicker, and more solid. They are of a vivid green colour, their upper surface glossy, their under a little pale. The flowers are blackish.

A small pod about six inches long, and four lines broad, wrinkled, flabby, oily, thick and brittle, may be considered as the fruit of this plant. The inner part of this pod is lined with a pulp that is reddish, aromatic, a little acid, and full of a black, oily, and balsamic liquor, in which an infinite number of black, shining, and almost imperceptible seeds float.

The season for gathering the pods begins about the latter end of September, and lasts till the end of December. They are dried in the shade: and when dry and fit for keeping, they are anointed externally with a little oil of cocoa or of calba, to render them supple, to preserve them the better, and to prevent them from becoming too dry and brittle.

This is nearly all that is known of the vanilla, which is particularly appropriated to perfume chocolate; a practice which has passed from the Mexicans to the Spaniards, and from them to other nations. That alone is esteemed, which grows in the inaccessible mountains of New Spain. We are equally ignorant how many different species there are of it; which are the most valuable; what is the soil which suits them best; how they are cultivated, and in what manner they are propagated. None but the natives of the country are acquainted with these circumstances. It is pretended, that they have only been able to preserve to themselves this source of wealth, by taking an oath, that they would never reveal to their tyrants any thing respecting the cultivation of the

the vanilla, and would suffer the most cruel tortures rather than be perjured. It is more probable, that they owe this advantage to the character of their conquerors; who, content with the riches they have acquired, and habituated to an indolent life, and to an effeminate ignorance, equally contemn both the curiosities of natural history, and the researches of those who apply themselves to it. Indigo, however, is better known to them.

Indigo is a kind of plant, whose root is three or four lines thick, and more than a foot long, of a faint smell, something like parsley. From this root issues a single stem nearly of the same thickness, about two feet high, straight, hard, almost woody, covered with a bark, slightly split, of a grey ash colour towards the bottom, green in the middle, reddish at the extremity, and without any appearance of pith in the inside. The leaves, ranged by two and two together around the stalk, are of an oval form, smooth, soft to the touch, furrowed above, of a deep green on the under side, and connected by a very short peduncle. From about one third of the stem to the extremity, there are ears that are loaded with very small flowers from a dozen to fifteen, but destitute of smell. The pistil, which is in the midst of each flower, changes into a pod, in which the seeds are inclosed.

This plant requires a smooth rich soil, well tilled, and not too dry. The seed of it, which, as to figure and colour, resembles gun powder, is sowed in little furrows that are about the breadth of the hough, two or three inches deep, and at a foot's distance from each other, and in as straight a line as possible. Continual attention must be paid to the plucking up of the weeds, which would soon choke the plant. Though it may be sown in all seasons, the spring is commonly preferred. Moisture causes this plant to shoot above the surface in three or four days. It is ripe at the end of two months. When it begins to flower, it is cut with pruning knives; and cut again at the end of every six weeks, if the weather is a little rainy. It lasts about two years; after which term it degenerates. It is then plucked up, and planted afresh.

As this plant soon exhausts the soil, because it does not absorb a sufficient quantity of air and dew to moisten the earth, it is of advantage to the cultivator to have a vast space which may remain covered with trees as long as till it becomes necessary to fell them, in order to make room for the indigo: for trees are to be considered as syphons, by means of which the earth and air reciprocally communicate to each other their fluid and vegetating substance; syphons into which the vapour and the juices, being alternately drawn up, are kept in equilibrium. Thus, while the sap ascends by the roots to the branches, the leaves draw in the air and vapours, which, circulating through the fibres of the tree, descend into the earth, and restore to it in dew what it loses in sap. It is customary, in order to maintain this reciprocal influence, when there are no trees to preserve the fields in a proper state for the sowing of indigo, to cover those which are exhausted by this plant, with potatoes or lianes, whose creeping branches preserve the freshness of the earth, and whose leaves, when burnt, renew its fertility.

Indigo is distinguished into two kinds, the true and the bastard. Though the first fetches a higher price by reason of its perfection, it is usually advantageous to cultivate the other, because it is heavier. A greater number of lands is found propitious to the former; the second thrives best in those which are most exposed to the rain. Both are liable to great accidents. Sometimes the plant becomes dry, and decays from the puncture of a worm that is very frequent; at others, the leaves, which are the valuable part of the plant, are devoured in the space of twenty-four hours by caterpillars. This last accident, which is but too common, has given rise to the saying, that the cultivators of indigo go to bed rich, and rise in the morning totally ruined.

This production ought to be gathered in with great precaution, for fear of making the farina that lies on the leaves, and which is very valuable, fall off by shaking it. When gathered, it is thrown into the steeping vat, which is a large tub, filled with water. Here it undergoes a fermentation, which, in twenty-four hours at far-

thest,

theft, is completed. A cock is then turned to let the water run into the second tub, called the mortar or pounding tub. They immediately clean the sleeping vat, in order to throw in fresh plants, and continue the work without interruption.

The water, which has run into the pounding tub, is found impregnated with a very subtle earth, which alone constitutes the dregs or blue substance that is the object of this process, and which must be separated from the useless salt of the plant, because this makes the dregs swim on the surface. To effect this, the water is violently shaken with wooden buckets that are full of holes and fixed to a long handle. This operation requires the greatest precaution. If the agitation be discontinued too soon, the part that is used in dying, not being sufficiently separated from the salt, would be lost. If, on the other hand, the dye were to be agitated too long after the entire separation, the parts would be brought together again, and form a new combination; and the salt, re-acting on the dregs, would excite a second fermentation, that would alter the dye, spoil its colour, and make what is called burnt indigo. These accidents are prevented by a close attention to the least alterations that the dye undergoes, and by the precaution which the workman takes, to draw but a little of it, from time to time, with a proper vessel. When he perceives that the coloured particles collect by separating from the rest of the liquor, he gives over shaking the buckets, in order to allow time to the blue dregs to precipitate to the bottom of the tub, where they are left to settle, till the water be quite clear. Holes made in the tub at different heights are then opened, one after another, and this useless water is let out.

The blue dregs remaining at the bottom, having acquired the consistence of a thick muddy liquid, cocks are then opened, which make it pass into the settler. After it is still more cleared of much superfluous water, in this third and last tub, it is drained into sacks; from whence, when water no longer filters through the cloth, this matter, now become of a thicker consistence, is put into chests, where it entirely loses its moisture.

ture. At the end of three months the indigo is fit for sale.

Washerwomen use it to give a bluish colour to linen; painters also employ it in their water colours; and dyers cannot make fine blue without indigo. The ancients procured it from the East Indies; in modern times, it has been transplanted into America. The cultivation of it, successively attempted at different places, appears to be fixed at Carolina, San-Domingo, and Mexico. The indigo known under the name of Guatimala, from whence it comes, is the most perfect of all. New Spain derives very considerable advantage from this plant; but it gains still more from the trade of cochineal.

The nature of the cochineal, without which, neither purple nor scarlet could be made, and which is found only in Mexico, hath been long unknown, even to nations who made the most use of it. The Spaniards, who are naturally reserved, and who instantly become mysterious when the discourse turns upon their colonies, kept a secret, which every thing induced them to believe was of the last importance to them. At last it was discovered, that it was an insect of the size and form of a bug.

This insect, like all animals, has two sexes. The female is badly shaped, tardy, and stupid; its eyes, mouth, antennae, and feet, are fixed so deep, and are so concealed on the folds of the skin, that it is impossible to distinguish them without a microscope. On which account, this animal was for a long time taken for the seed of a plant.

The male is very scarce, and sufficient to serve three hundred females and more, and is active, small, and slender, in comparison of the female: its neck is narrower than the head, and still narrower than the rest of the body. The thorax is of an elliptic form, a little longer than the neck and head together, and flattened below; its antennae are jointed, and out of each joint issue four bristles, that are disposed in pairs on each side. It has six feet, each formed of distinct parts. From the posterior extremity of its body, two large hairs or bristles stretch out, that are four or five times the length of the insect.

insect. It bears two wings that are fixed to the upper part of the thorax, which fall, like the wings of ordinary flies, when it walks or rests. These wings, which are of an oblong form, are suddenly diminished in breadth at the point where they are connected to the body. They are strengthened by two long muscles, one of which extends itself on the outside all around the wing; and the other, which is internal and parallel to the former, seems interrupted towards the summit of the wings. The male is of a bright red, the female of a deeper colour.

The shrub, on which both live, called the Nopal, or Indian fig, is armed with prickles, and is about five feet high. Its leaves are thick and oval; its flowers large, and its fruit is of the shape of a fig. It is filled with a red juice, to which the cochineal probably owes its colour.

The Indian fig is commonly propagated from one or two of its leaves put in a hole, and covered with earth. The cultivation of it consists only in extirpating the weeds that surround it. It must often be renewed; because the younger it is the better, and more considerable is its produce. It is found in various countries of Mexico, at Tlascala, Chalula, Chiapa, and New Galicia; but it is not common. These people never plant it; and the cochineal, which is such as rude nature of itself produces, is called wild, and is of little or no value. The Indians alone of Guaxaca devote themselves wholly to this species of industry. They are never discouraged, either by the continual attention it requires, nor by the too common misfortunes to which it exposes them. Their intelligence, activity, and easy circumstances, enable them to support a bad harvest, and wait for a good one. In general, these crops are more regular in a dry soil, in which the nopal flourishes, and under a temperate sky, where the cochineal is exposed to fewer accidents, than in those parts of the province where the cold and heat are more sensibly felt.

As soon as the favourable season arrives, the Mexicans, if I may use the expression, so the cochineals on the plant that is proper for them, by fastening to it little nests of moss, that contain each twelve or fifteen. Thre-

or four days after they lay their little ones, which spread themselves with astonishing celerity over all the branches. They soon lose this activity, and are seen to fasten themselves, without rambling any longer, to the most nutritive and best exposed part of the leaf, until they have received their whole growth. They do not gnaw it; they only puncture it, and extract the juice with a small trunk, with which nature has provided them for this purpose.

Three crops of cochineal are made every year, which are so many fresh generations of this insect. The last produces only an indifferent cochineal, because it is mixed with detached parcels of the leaves, which have been scraped, in order to take away the new-born insects, which otherwise it would be hardly possible to gather; and because the young cochineals are then mixed with the old; a circumstance which considerably diminishes their value. Immediately before the rains, they cut the branches of the nopal, in order to save the little insects which are on them. These are laid up in the houses, where the leaves maintain their freshness, as the leaves of all mucilaginous plants. Here the cochineals thrive during the bad season. As soon as that is over, they are placed on the trees without doors, where the vivifying freshness of the air soon makes them propagate.

The moment the cochineals are gathered, they are plunged in hot water to kill them. There are different ways of drying them. The best is, exposing them to the sun for several days, where they take a red brown colour, which the Spaniards call *renegrida*. The second is putting them into an oven, where they assume a greyish colour with veins of purple, which has given them the name of *ja/peada*. But the most imperfect, which is what the Indians most generally practise, consists in putting them on plates along with their cakes of maize, which process frequently occasions their being burnt, and gives them the appellation of *negra*.

Though the cochineal is classed in the animal kingdom, which is a species the most perishable, it notwithstanding never spoils. Without any other attention than merely that of keeping it in a box, it has been preserved.

preserved in all its virtue for ages. Its price, which is always very high, might justly excite the emulation of those nations which cultivate the American islands, and of other nations who inhabit regions whose temperature would be propitious to this insect, and to the plant on which it feeds. New Spain, however, has the sole possession of this rich production. Independently of what it furnishes to Asia, it sends every year to Europe about two thousand five hundred bags or sacks, which are sold at Cadiz, one with another, for * 3300 livrs. This is a very considerable produce, which hardly costs the Spaniards any trouble. It should seem as if nature had gratuitously given them, what they sell at a high price to other nations. She has bestowed privileges upon them, by granting them, at the same time, both the productions which yield the most riches, and gold and silver, which are the vehicle or token of all productions.

Such is the dominion which these bright and fatal metals have over us, that they have counterbalanced the infamy and execration which the pillagers of America justly deserved. The names of Mexico, Peru, and Potosi, no longer make us shudder; and yet we are men! Even at this day, when the spirit of justice and the sentiments of humanity are breathed forth in all our writings, and are become the invariable rule of our judgments; a navigator, who should come into our ports with a vessel laden with riches, notoriously acquired by methods equally barbarous, would land amidst the general acclamations of the multitude. Where is then that wisdom, which is so much the boast of the present age? What is then that gold, which takes from us the idea of vice, and wipes away the horror of bloodshed? Without doubt, there is some advantage annexed to a medium of exchange between nations, to an external representation of all sorts of value, to a common estimate of all labours. But, would it not have been better, if nations had continued quiet, detached from each other, ignorant, and hospitable, than to be poisoned with the most ferocious of all passions?

The origin of metals has not always been well understood. It was long imagined, that they were as old as the creation. It is now believed, with greater reason, that they are formed successively. In fact, it is not possible to doubt, that nature is not continually employed in action, and that her springs are equally powerful in every part of the globe.

Every metal according to the chymists, has, for its principle, an earth which constitutes it, and which is peculiar to it. It is exhibited to us, sometimes under the form that characterizes it, and sometimes under various forms, in which no eyes but those that have been habituated to these researches can recognize it. In the first case, it is called *virgin*; in the second, mineralized ore.

Metals, whether virgin or mineralized, are sometimes scattered by fragments, in beds of earth, that are horizontal or inclined. But this is not the place of their origin. They have been carried thither by great commotions, floods, and earthquakes, which are continually subverting our miserable planet. They are, in general, found either in regular veins, or in detached masses, within the midst of the rocks and mountains where they were formed.

According to the junctures of naturalists, in these great work-houses which are always kept heated, exhalations are perpetually rising. These sulphureous and saline liquors act on the metallic particles, attenuate and divide them; and make them lightly circulate within the cavities of the earth. They unite again; and then becoming too heavy to support themselves in the air, they fall, and are heaped up one upon another. If, in their different motions, they have not met with other bodies, they form pure metals. The case is otherwise, if they happen to be combined with foreign substances.

Nature, which seemed as if she wished to conceal them, has not been able to secret them from the avidity of man. By repeated observations, we are now able to discover the places where mines are to be found. These are commonly mountains, where plants grow with difficulty, and soon fade; where trees are small and crooked; where the moisture of dews, rains, and even

snows, is soon dried up; where sulphureous and mineral exhalations arise; where the waters are loaded with vitriolic salts; and where the sands contain metallic particles. Though each of these marks, separately considered, be ambiguous, it seldom happens, when all of them are found together, but that the earth contains some mine.

But what are the terms, on which we extract this treasure, or this poison of human life, from that abyss where nature had secreted it? We must pierce rocks to an immense depth; dig subterraneous channels, to carry off the waters which flow in, and menace us on every side; convey into immense galleries forests cut into props; support the vaults of these galleries under the enormous weight of the earth, which perpetually tends to fill them up, and bury in their ruins those avaricious and presumptuous men who constructed them; we must scoop out canals and aqueducts; invent hydraulic engines of astonishing and various powers, and construct all the several kinds of furnaces: we must be exposed to the danger of being suffocated or consumed by an exhalation, which kindles at the dim light of those lamps that are used to carry on the works; and at last die of consumption, which reduces human life to one half of its duration. If we consider how many observations, experiments, and trials, all these labours suppose, we shall carry the origin of the world far beyond its known antiquity. To shew us the gold, iron, copper, tin, and silver employed by the first men, is to beguile us with a falsehood which can only impose upon children.

When the labour of mineralogy is finished, that of metallurgy begins. Its object is to separate metals from each other, and to detach them from extraneous bodies which envelop them.

In order to separate the gold from the stones which contain it, it is sufficient to break them in pieces, and reduce them to powder. The matter, thus pulverized, is afterwards triturated with quicksilver, which combines itself to this precious metal, but without forming any union, either with the rock, or sand, or even the earth which were mixed with it. By means of fire, the mercury is afterwards distilled, which, on separating, leaves the

the gold at the bottom of the vessel, in the state of a powder, which is purified in the coppel. Virgin silver also requires no other preparations.

But when the silver is combined with foreign substances, or with metals of a different nature, it requires great knowledge, and consummate experience, to purify it. Every circumstance authorizes us to think, that this art is unknown in the new world. It is also generally acknowledged, that the German or Swiss miners would find, in a mine that has already been worked, more wealth than the Spaniard had already extracted out of it. They might enrich themselves by mines, which, for want of skill, have been rejected as inadequate to the expences of working them.

The art of the Mexicans, whatsoever it might be, was infinitely inferior to that of their oppressors. They had consequently less silver than gold. These metals were not employed by them as a medium of exchange: they were only objects of ornament, or mere curiosity.

In the first years subsequent to the conquest, the Spaniards spared themselves the trouble and expences that are inseparable from the working of mines. They wrested from the mexicans all the metals which they had amassed from the foundation of their empire. The temples, the palaces of the grandees, the houses of private persons, the meanest hovels; all were searched and pillaged. Though the abhorrence the Indians had against their tyrants made them bury a great deal of their wealth in the ground, and throw much more of it into the great lake, and into their rivers, yet avarice found enough to satisfy itself. When this source was exhausted, recourse was necessarily had to the mines.

They dug them at first indifferently, every where, but rather preferred the sea-coasts. Experience teaching them, that those which were nearest the ocean were the poorest, they became disgusted with this plan. At present, they work no mine, that is not at a very great distance from the northern sea, where it might be exposed to the incursions, and, perhaps, to the invasions of the Europeans. The metals that are found on the gulf of California will remain in perfect security, till these latitudes become better known, and more frequent-

ed. The principal mines are in the provinces of Zacatecas, New Biscay, and Mexico, three provinces situated in the inland parts of the empire, where it is impossible for an enemy to penetrate by land, and to which no navigable rivers lead. These mines may employ forty thousand Indians, under the direction of four thousand Spaniards.

The mines belong to the person who discovers them. The only form he is obliged to observe, is to get his samples approved by the government. As much land is granted to him as he chuses; but he is obliged to give a piastre, or five livres five sous * a foot, to the proprietor. The third of what he purchases belongs to government; which, after long continued and absurd attempts to have it worked on its own account, resolves to dispose of it to any one who will be a purchaser, in preference to the person who works the mine. All the mines that are abandoned become also the property of the crown.

It receives 420 livres † for every hundred weight of mercury that is used. In vain have intelligent people represented, that this excessive tax necessarily discouraged industry. All that has been obtained, is, the grant of credit for two years, but not without paying interest. It is seldom that those who undertake to work mines are able to go on without these indulgences. Those uncertain and hazardous enterprizes are scarcely ever undertaken, unless by men whose affairs are embarrassed, or totally ruined.

Men of good sense, and in easy circumstances, have a more particular aversion to these undertakings, because of the obligation they are under of delivering to government the fifth part of the silver, and the tenth part of the gold which they draw from the earth. The state had a long time objected to this difference of taxation; but has been obliged to consent to it; because the mines of gold, being more precarious than those of silver, were totally abandoned. Both will soon be unable to pay the tribute imposed on them. As gold and silver become more common in trade, the value of them proportional-

ly diminishes, and becomes less adequate to the goods for which they are exchanged. This decreasing value of metals would have been attended with still greater consequences, if the labours which procure them had not been successively rendered more and more simple. This economy is carried very near as far as it can go; and whenever that happens, the court of Madrid will be under a necessity of lessening the duties, unless it submits to have the best mines neglected, as the indifferent ones have been. Perhaps, it will soon be obliged to content itself with two reals, or twenty-six sous * a mark, which it receives for the duties of stamping and coining.

The mint of Mexico annually coins about 65 millions of livres †; the sixth part nearly in gold, the rest in silver. About the half of this passes into Europe, a sixth part into the East Indies, a twelfth into the Spanish islands. The rest passes off insensibly in foreign colonies, or circulates in the empire. There it serves to carry on the inland trade, and to pay the taxes, which are considerable.

Taxes established in Mexico. All the males among the Indians, from eighteen to fifty, pay a poll-tax of 11 livres 16 sous ‡, of which eight-ninths go to the treasury, and the rest is destined to various uses. The Mestees, who are deemed Indians for the two first generations, and free Mulattoes, are subjected to the same taxation. Those negro slaves are exempted from it, for whom 280 livres || have been paid to the king at their admission into the colony.

The Spaniards, whom they have not so far degraded as to impose on them a personal tribute, are subjected to all the other taxes, the most considerable of which is that of thirty-three *per cent.* on the value of all the goods that are sent to them from Europe, which retains twenty-five of this under divers denominations, and eight of it is paid at their arrival in the new world. This ruinous taxation does not prevent them from being afterwards subjected to the alcavala.

The alcavala is a duty on every thing that is sold or exchanged, and is paid as often as the sale or exchange takes

* 1 s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. † 2,843,750l. ‡ About 10s. || 12l. 5s.

takes place. It was established in the metropolis in 1341; and it hath gradually risen to 10 per cent. of the value of merchandise sold in wholesale, and even to fourteen of all sold by retail. Philip II. after the disaster of his fleet, so well known under the pompous title of the Invincible, was determined by his urgent wants to introduce this taxation into Mexico, as well as in the other colonies. Though it ought to have been only a temporary tax, yet it has continued ever since. It is true, that it has not been augmented, and that it remains at two and a half per cent. as it was at first settled. The cruciade has not had the same stability.

The cruciade is a bull which allows great indulgences, and permits the use of eggs, butter, and cheese, during Lent. The government, to whom the court of Rome gave up the benefits accruing from it, had divided the persons, who were willing to avail themselves of it, into four classes. This indulgence was paid by those who lived by their industry, at the rate of two livres six sous*. Those who had been able to raise a capital of 10,500 livres †, paid 5 livres 5 sous ‡; it cost 10 livres 10 sous § to those who possessed more than 58,600 livres ||, and 52 livres 10 sous ¶ to the viceroy, and those who were invested with the most honourable dignities. It was left to every man's conscience, by informing him that he would obtain nothing if his contribution was not proportionable to his fortune. Mexico alone then paid for indulgencies about 2,600,000 livres **. It is probable that this superstition decreased, since the ministry in 1556 fixed this bull, for all conditions, at 40 sous ††. Government obliges nobody to take it; but the priests would refuse the comforts of religion to those who should not have purchased it: and perhaps there is not, in all Spanish America, a man sufficiently enlightened, or bold enough to oppose this imposition ††.

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* About 2 s. † 459 l. 7s. 6d. ‡ 4 s. 5 d.

§ About 9 s. 2 d. || 2563 l. 15 s. + About 2 l. 4 s.

** 113,750 l. †† 1 s. 9 d.

†† Much has been said about savages and barbarians; but are they savages of the new or old world, of the north or of the south, whom religion and government make a jest of in this manner?

One species of oppression, which has not been so patiently submitted to, is the duty which they have of late put on salt and tobacco. The people who suffered their former calamities without murmuring, were highly disgusted with these innovations. One of them appeared so repugnant to natural right, and the other so strongly contradicted one of their most agreeable enjoyments, that though they had been for a long time accustomed to the yoke, there was an insurrection among them. The atrocious conduct of the farmers of the revenues greatly added to the general discontent. It discovered itself from one end of the empire to the other, and has been heard of even in Europe. Some mild dispositions have palliated the evil; but they are still in a degree of ferment, that the metropolis will not easily appease without some sacrifice. One of the most agreeable to its colonies would be that of stamped paper.

Independent of the regular tributes which Spain exacts of her colonies, she raises, in times of distress, under the denomination of *loan*, considerable sums, of which she hath never paid either the interest or the capital. This grievance, which began in the time of Philip II. hath been continued to our days. It was more frequently repeated under Philip V. than in the course of the other reigns, which contributed not a little to render the French name odious in these countries. This contribution, which was levied on all who possessed any fortune, was urged with more eagerness at Mexico than in other places; because the Europeans, Creoles, mestees, Mulattoes, and especially the Indians, were there in more affluent circumstances. The public prosperity has been greatly diminished in this country, by the revenue laws; and is every day still more so by the rapaciousness of the clergy.

The tenth of every produce is rigorously collected by the clergy. The functions of their profession are paid them at an extravagant price. Their lands are immense, and every day they acquire a greater extent of territory. They are said to be in possession of a fourth of the revenues of the empire. The bishop of Angelos alone has an income of 1,260,000 livres*. These scandalous

riches

riches have multiplied ecclesiastics to such a degree, that they now constitute the fifth part of the whole white people. Some of them were born in the colony; but the greatest part are adventurers come from Europe, in order to screen themselves from the authority of their superiors, or to make their fortune expeditiously.

The revenue of the Crown is not what it ought to be. The duties fixed on goods, which are imported here from Cadiz, and on the ores, the quicksilver, the poll-tax, the imposts, the royal domain, are such great objects, that we cannot help being greatly surprised, when we see that the sovereign annually draws from Mexico, though the best conducted of his possessions, no more than about 6,300,000 livres*. The rest, that is to say, almost the whole, is absorbed by the civil and military government of the country, which are both in the utmost disorder.

The finances are swallowed up by the vast number of clerks that are stationed every where; by corregidores who administer justice in the provinces; by the commandants of places; by three superior councils of justice, known by the name of Audience; by those who are invested with full authority, or by subalterns who gain the confidence of people in place. A part of this pillage finds its way into Europe; another part contributes to feed the pride, laziness, luxury, and profligacy of a small number of Mexican towns, but chiefly of Mexico itself.

The Mexicans, who for a time might have been at a loss to determine whether the Spaniards were a swarm of robbers or a conquering people, saw their capital almost totally destroyed by those cruel wars, of which it was the theatre. It was not long before Cortez rebuilt it; and it has since been extended and embellished.

Its streets are broad, straight, and intersect each other at right angles. The houses are pretty spacious, but without conveniences or decorations. Not one of the public edifices, that are shewn with the greatest ostentation to travellers, recalls to their remembrance the finer days of architecture, nor even the good Gothic times.

The principal squares have a fountain in the centre, and are pretty regular; but this is all their merit. There is a walk with a jet d'eau, where eight alleys meet, whose trees have a form and foliage not very agreeable to the eye. Superstition has amassed treasures from all the quarters of the globe in innumerable churches, without there being a single one that raises the soul to any sublime ideas, or that can fill the heart with pleasing sentiments.

The air of this city is very temperate, so that woollen clothing may be worn all the year. The least precautions are sufficient to prevent any inconveniences from the heat. Charles V. asked a Spaniard, on his arrival from Mexico, how long the interval was there between summer and winter? *Just as long*, replied he, with great truth and wit, *as it takes to pass out of sunshine into shade.*

The city is built in the middle of a great lake, which is bisected by a very narrow isthmus. That part of the lake whose water is soft, calm, and full of fish, falls into the other, which is salt, generally agitated, and without fish. The circumference of this whole lake, which is unequal in its extent, is about thirty leagues.

People are not agreed with regard to the origin of these waters. The most common and probable opinion makes them issue from a large and lofty mountain, situated to the south-west of Mexico; with this difference, that the salt water runs under a tract of land that is full of mines, which communicate this quality to it.

Before the conquest, Mexico, and several other towns situated on the margin of the lake, were exposed to inundations, which rendered them dangerous to live in. Dikes, constructed with incredible expence and labour, were not always sufficient to divert the torrents which poured down from the mountains. The Spaniards have likewise experienced these calamities. Most of their buildings though constructed with care, and supported on piles, after a few years, sink four, five, or six feet, in a soil that is not firm enough to support them.

These inconveniences gave rise to the project of draining off the waters. Accounts that were prodigiously exaggerated, assure us, that in 1624, four hundred se-
venty-

venty-one thousand one hundred and fifty-four Indians were employed in digging this canal. In order to find a fund necessary for defraying the expence of it, one hundredth part of the price of houses, lands, and merchandize, was exacted; a taxation unknown in the new world. Ignorance, discouragements, and particular interests, made this noble and wise undertaking miscarry.

The viceroy Ladeyrera, in 1635, thought that it was indispensably necessary to build Mexico in another place. Avarice, incapable of making any sacrifice; pleasure, ever afraid of interrupting its enjoyments; idleness, which dreads trouble; all the passions united themselves to thwart an idea, which in itself was liable to some objections.

The new efforts that have since been made to render living in this country as safe as it is agreeable, have not proved altogether successful: whether this may be owing to their not having been properly exerted, or that nature has thrown insurmountable obstacles in the way, Mexico remains still exposed to the fury of the waters; and the dread of inundations has greatly diminished its population. The majority of historians assure us, that it formerly contained more than two hundred thousand souls; at present, it has not above fifty thousand. This number is composed of Spaniards, Mestees, Indians, Negroes, Mulattoes, of such a diversity of heterogeneous races from the white to the black, that among an hundred faces one will hardly find two of the same colour.

Before this emigration, riches had accumulated in Mexico to an incredible degree. What in other countries is made of iron and copper, was here made of silver or gold. These splendid metals, as well as pearls and precious stones, were employed to adorn their horses and servants, the most common utensils, and used for the meanest purposes. The manners of the country, which are always conformable to the luxury that prevails, correspond with this style of romantic magnificence. The women, in their palaces, were waited upon by thousands of slaves, and never appeared in public but with a retinue which, amongst us, is reserved for the Majesty of a throne. To these extravagancies, the men added profusions still greater for negro women, whom they public-

ly raised to the rank of their mistresses. This luxury, which was so excessive in the ordinary actions of life, exceeded all bounds on occasion of the slightest festivals. The general pride then exerted itself, and each man lavished millions to acquire the superiority for his own particular taste. The crimes necessary to support this extravagance were previously atoned for; as superstition had pronounced every man holy and just, who should contribute liberally to churches.

The treasures, and the pomp naturally attendant upon them, must necessarily have diminished at Mexico, in proportion as those who possessed them sought an asylum at Angelos and other towns. But the advantage, which this capital enjoys, of being the centre of the dominion, the seat of government, the place where the coin is struck, the residence of the greatest proprietors of lands and of the richest traders, has always occasioned the greatest part of the principal affairs of the empire to be transacted here.

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THE trade Mexico carries on with the other parts of America is much confined. By the north sea it receives from Maracibo and Caracos, cocoa greatly superior to its own, and negroes by the way of the Havanah and Cartagena: it gives in exchange meal and silver.

Its connections with the South Sea are of greater utility to it, without being much more considerable. Originally, Peru was allowed to send annually to New Spain two vessels, whose cargoes together were not to exceed one million ten thousand livres *. This was some time afterwards reduced to one half. It was totally suppressed in 1636, on pretence that it prejudiced the trade of the metropolis, by the quantity of East India goods it imported into the country. The merchants of Lima complained a long time, but ineffectually, of a barbarous law, that deprived them of the double advantage of reselling the superfluities of their commodities, and of receiving

ceiving those they wanted. The communication between the two colonies was at last re-established, but with restrictions, which prove that the government had not acquired any considerable information, and that it only yielded to importunity. Since this period, the vessels sent out from Callao and Guayaquil, carry cocoa, wines, and brandies, to Acapulco and Sonsonate, on the coast of Gautimala ; and bring back pitch, tar, arnotto, indigo, cochineal, iron, the haberdashery wares of Angelos, and as many contraband goods as possible from the Philippine islands, so celebrated in Europe from the connections which they have with Mexico. The importance of this communication seems to require, that we should trace its origin.

When the court of Madrid, whose ambition increased with their prosperity, had formed the plan of a great establishment in Asia, their attention was seriously engaged in considering of expedients to insure its success. This project must necessarily be exposed to great difficulties. The riches of America so powerfully attracted the Spaniards, who consented to a voluntary exile, that it did not appear possible to engage them to go and settle at the Philippines, unless it was agreed to give them a share in these treasures. This sacrifice was resolved upon. The rising colony was authorized to send every year, into America, India goods in exchange for metals.

This unbounded liberty was attended with such consequences, that it excited the jealousy of the metropolis. Things were a little quieted by restraining to 3,150,000 livres* the trade allowed to be carried on. This sum was divided into twelve thousand equal shares. Every head of a family was to have one, and persons in place a number proportioned to their rank. Religious communities were comprehended in this arrangement, according to the extent of their credit, and the opinion that was entertained of their utility. Five hundred of these shares were allowed to the Jesuits, whose employments and enterprizes seemed to require greater means.

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* 137,812l rcs.

The vessels which departed at first from the island of Cebu, and afterwards from the island of Luconia, originally took the route of Peru. The length of this voyage was prodigious. They discovered trade-winds, which opened a much shorter passage to Mexico; and this branch of commerce was transacted on its coast, where it was established.

Every year, in the middle of July, they sent out from the port of Manilla a galleon, which is commonly from eighteen hundred to two thousand tons. After getting clear of a multitude of islands and rocks which delay its course, it steers east-north-east, in order to meet with the west winds in thirty degrees latitude, which bring them in a straight course to the end of their voyage. This vessel, which is very heavy laden, is six months on her passage, because the sailors who are on board, from their extreme timidity, never hoist the main-sail in the night time, and often lower all their sails without the least occasion. At last the ship arrives at Mexico.

The coasts of this great empire are not like those of Peru, where the vicinity and heights of the Cordeleras afford a perpetual spring, and cause regular and mild winds to blow. As soon as the ship has passed the latitude of Panama, the free communication of the atmosphere, east by west, not being any longer interrupted by this prodigious chain of mountains, the climate becomes different. In reality, navigation in these latitudes is safe and easy from the middle of October to the beginning of May; but during the rest of the year, the violence of the west wind, the dreadful storms, the excessive rains, the suffocating heats, the total calms; all these obstacles, which are combined, or succeed each other, render the sea troublesome, and even dangerous. Throughout this whole extent of coast, which is more than six hundred leagues, there is not a single bark to be seen, nor even the least canoe, either for trade or fishing. Even the ports, which are scattered up and down here, are open, defenceless, and exposed to the insults of the first pirate that may be inclined to attack them. The port of Acapulco, where the galleons arrive,

rive, is the only one that has attracted the attention of government.

Ships arrive there by two inlets separated from each other by a small island; the entrance into them, in the day-time, is by means of a sea breeze, as the failing out in the night-time is affected by a land breeze. A miserable fort, forty-two pieces of cannon, and a garrison of sixty men defend it. It is equally extensive, safe, and commodious. The basin, which constitutes this harbour, is surrounded by lofty mountains, which are so dry, that they are even destitute of water. The air here is hot, heavy, and unwholesome, to which none can habituate themselves, except certain negroes that are born under a similar climate, or some Mulattoes. This feeble and miserable colony is crowned with a vast accession to its numbers upon the arrival of the galleons; traders flocking here from all the provinces of Mexico, who come to exchange European toys, their own cochineal, and about ten millions * of silver for species, muslins, printed linens, silks, perfumes, and the gold works of Asia. After continuing about three months, the vessel takes again the route of the Philippines before the first of April, with one or two companies of infantry that are appointed to relieve the garrison of Manilla. Part of the riches with which it is laden remains in the colony; the rest is distributed among the nations which had contributed to form its cargo.

The immense space which the galleons have to traverse, has made it necessary to look out for places where they might take in refreshments. The first that has been met with of this kind, is on the route from Acapulco to the Philippines, in those islands known at first by the name of the Ladrones, and since by the name of Marianne-islands. They were discovered by Magellan, in 1521. They were at first neglected: the galleons afterwards used to put in there for refreshment; but there was no regular settlement made here, till the year 1678.

These islands are situated at the extremity of the South Sea, near four hundred leagues to the east of the Philippines.

pines. Their position, in the torrid zone, does not prevent the climate from being moderately temperate. The air is pure, the sky serene, and the soil fruitful. Before their intercourse with the Europeans, the inhabitants, who were always naked, had no other food but fruits, roots, and fish. As fishing was their usual and sole occupation, they had constructed canoes, more perfect than any that have ever been found in the rest of the world.

The people, who are very numerous, and are diffused in twelve islands, that are the only inhabited ones in this archipelago, have gradually diminished since the invasion of the Spaniards, either by contagious disorders, or by the bad usage which they have experienced. The remainder, to the number of two thousand seven hundred persons, have collected themselves in the centre of the island of Guam, which they have from twenty-five to thirty leagues circumference. It has a garrison of a hundred men, who are appointed to defend two small forts, that are situated on two roads, one of which receives a small vessel, which every two years arrives here from the Philippines, and the other is destined to furnish refreshments to the galleon. This last fort is so wretched, that the vessel never stays here above two days; and in that short time it is often exposed to very great dangers. It is very extraordinary, that Spain has not sought for a better harbour; or very singular, that no one has been found in such a multitude of islands. California presents an asylum more secure to the galleons that come from the Philippines to Acapulco.

California is properly a long neck of land, which stretches from the northern coasts of America, and runs along between east and south, as far as the torrid zone; it is washed on each side by the Pacific ocean. The part that is known of this peninsula is three hundred leagues long, and ten, twenty, thirty, or forty broad.

It is impossible, that, in so vast an extent, the nature of the soil, and the temperature of the air, should be every where the same. It may be said, however, that in general, the climate here is dry, and excessively hot; the ground bare, stony, mountainous, sandy, and consequently barren, and unfit for agriculture, and breeding cattle.

cattle. Amidst the small number of trees that are found here, the most useful is the pitahaya, the produce of which constitutes the principal food of the Californians. Its branches, which are fluted and perpendicular, have no leaves; and it is from the stems that the fruit grows. It is prickly, like the Indian chefnut; but its pulp resembles that of the fig, with this advantage, that it is much sweeter, and more delicate.

The sea, which is richer than the land, swarms with fish of every kind, in the greatest abundance, and of the most exquisite taste. But what renders the gulf of California of more importance, is the pearls, which, in the fishing season, draw together the inhabitants of all the provinces of New Spain*.

The Californians are well made, and very stout. An extreme pusillanimity, inconstancy, indolence, stupidity, and even insensibility, form their character. They are children, in whom the powers of reason are not yet unfolded. They are swarthier than the Mexicans. This difference of colour proves, that the civilized life of society subverts, or totally changes the order and laws of nature, since we find, within the temperate zone, a savage people that are blacker than the civilized nations of the torrid zone.

Before the Europeans had penetrated into California, the natives had no form of religion; and their government was such as might be expected from their ignorance. Each nation was an assemblage of several cottages, more or less numerous, that were all mutually confederated by alliances, but without any chief. They were strangers even to filial obedience. The men were acquainted with no species of dress, but the women covered those parts nature intended should be concealed, with extreme care.

* It is an established maxim in America, to consider as one nation all the people that speak the same language, whether they live in society together, or are dispersed throughout different districts. In this point of view, there are six nations in California, according to some travellers, and only three according to others. This diversity of opinion has arisen from this, that the former have supposed these languages to be original; the latter, after a more deliberate examination, have

Whether these particulars were known, or not, certain it is, that Mexico was no sooner reduced, and tranquillity established, than the plan was laid for the conquest of California. Cortez landed there in 1526. He had not even time to take a survey of it, because he was obliged to return to his government, where the report of his death had disposed the minds of the people to a general insurrection. The several attempts that have since been made, to form an establishment there, have all been unsuccessful. The endeavours of the court were not more fortunate than those of individuals. If we pay the least attention to the spirit that directed these enterprises, we shall find, that want of humanity, courage, and perseverance, was the cause of these misfortunes. There was not a single expedition that was not ill concerted, or imprudently conducted.

Spain, dispirited with her losses and expences, had entirely abandoned the acquisition of California, when the Jesuits, in 1697, solicited permission to undertake it. As soon as they had obtained the consent of government, they began to execute a plan of legislation, which they had formed from accurate ideas of the nature of the soil, the character of the inhabitants, and the influence of the climate. They were not guided by fanaticism. They arrived among the savages they purposed to civilize, with curiosities that might amuse them, grain proper for their food, and apparel fit to please them. The hatred these people bore to the Spanish name could not support itself against these demonstrations of benevolence. They testified their acknowledgements, as much as their inconstancy and want of sensibility allowed. These vices were in part subdued by the religious institutors, who prosecuted their project with a warmth and resolution peculiar to their order. They became carpenters, masons, weavers, and husbandmen; and, by these means, succeeded in imparting knowledge, and, in some measure, a taste for the first arts to these savage people, whom they successively united into one body. In 1745, they consisted of forty-three villages, separated by the barrenness of the soil, and the want of water. This republic will augment, in proportion as the successors of those who formed it shall prosecute their labours

hours northwards, where, according to a plan that was judiciously concerted, a communication was to be established between the missionaries of the peninsula and those of the continent. They are only separated from each other, by the river Colorado.

These small villages principally subsist on corn and pulse which they cultivate, and on the fruits and domestic animals of Europe, the breeding of which is an object of continual attention. The Indians have each their field, and the property of what they reap; but such is their want of foresight, that they would squander in a day what they had gathered, if the missionary did not take upon himself to distribute it to them as they have occasion for it. They already make some coarse stuffs. Their necessaries are purchased with pearls, which they fish in the gulf, and with wine that nearly resembles that of Madeira, which they sell to New Spain and to the galleons; and experience hath shewn, that it is highly necessary they should be prohibited the use of this liquor.

Twelve laws, that are very simple, suffice to regulate this rising state. In order to enforce the observance of them, the missionary chuses the most intelligent person of the village, who is empowered to whip and imprison, the only punishments of which they have any knowledge.

In all California there are only two garrisons, each consisting of thirty men, and a soldier to accompany every missionary. These troops were selected by the legislators, and are under their orders, though they are paid by the government. The court of Madrid saw no inconvenience in leaving these trifling forces in the hands of those who had acquired their confidence; and they demonstrated to them, that nothing but this expedient would have prevented the oppression of their new subjects.

They will continue happy just as long as no mines are discovered in their territory. If there are any mines, against which the great number on the other side of the gulf is a strong presumption, no sooner will they be found, but the edifice that has been reared with such trouble and good sense, will be at once subverted. These

people, like many others, will disappear from the surface of the earth. The gold, which the Spanish government would draw from California, would deprive it of the advantages which its policy may now find in the labours of its missionaries, who should rather be encouraged to pursue their useful undertakings. These, perhaps might enable the court of Madrid to build forts, which would put them in a condition of beholding with tranquillity the discovery of that passage which the English have long sought for, the north-west passage to the Pacific ocean. It has also been imagined, that these ramparts might prove a barrier against the Russians, who, in 1741, penetrated within twelve degrees of Cape Mendocino, the most northern point that has hitherto been discovered in California. But if they had observed that this voyage could not be undertaken but from the seas of Kamtschatka, they would have been sensible, that nothing could be fitted out there, but weak armaments merely to gratify curiosity, and which therefore could not occasion the least disquietude.

An advantage more certain, and less remote, is the facility which California gives, of reducing the provinces which extend from the other side of the gulf to the river Colorado. These rich countries are at such a distance from Mexico, and so difficult of access, that it appeared as dangerous to attempt the conquest of them, as useless to execute it. The openness and the safety of the sea of California ought to encourage the undertaking, furnish the means of succeeding in it, and insure the advantages accruing from it. Philosophers themselves will invite the court of Madrid to these expeditions, as soon as they shall have seen them solemnly abjure those fanatical and destructive principles, which have hitherto constituted the basis of their policy.

In the mean time, till Spain shall adopt these great speculations, California furnishes a safe harbour to ships sailing from the Philippines to Mexico. Cape St Lucas, situated at the southern extremity of the peninsula, is the place where they touch. There they find a good harbour, refreshments, and signals which give them information if any enemy appears in these latitudes that are very dangerous, and where they have been most frequently

quently attacked. It was in 1734, that the galleon arrived here for the first time. Its orders and its necessities have ever since that time brought it hither.

The system adopted by all the governments of Europe, to hold colonies in the most absolute dependence on the metropolis, has always rendered the connections of Mexico with Asia suspicious to several of the Spanish politicians. The opinion which has prevailed, and is still maintained, that it is not possible to preserve the Philippines without this communication, has alone prevented them from obstructing it. All their efforts have only been able to prevent Peru from having any share in it. This vast empire has, by severe and repeated laws, been deprived of the advantage of drawing directly from the east, that merchandise of which it stood in need, and even of the liberty of indirectly deriving it from New Spain.

These shackles accorded not with the bold and fertile genius of Alberoni. Full of the most extensive projects for the prosperity and glory of that monarchy which he attempted to restore, he purposed to retain in it the treasures of the new world, to which it had hitherto served only as a mart. According to his plan, the east was to furnish all the articles of dress to the Spanish colonies, and to the metropolis itself, which it would have received through the channel of its colonies. He justly expected, that those powers, whose interests this arrangement would prejudge, and whose industry it would ruin, would endeavour to obstruct it; but he studied to brave their fury in the European seas, and he had already given orders for putting the coasts and harbours of the South Sea in a condition of not being intimidated by any distressed squadrons that might happen to attack them.

These views were defective in precision. Alberoni, transported by the enthusiasm of his opinions, and by his hatred against those nations who proposed to embarrass his measures, did not perceive, that the silks and linens that should be imported into Spain in the way he proposed, would bear such an extravagant price, as would necessarily prevent the consumption of them.

The project of clothing the people of North and South America from Asia, appears to be a very sensible one.

The colonists would be clothed more agreeably cheaper, and in a manner better adapted to the climate. The wars of Europe would not expose them to the want of articles that are indispensably necessary: They would become more wealthy, would be better affected to the mother-country, and better enabled to defend themselves against the enemies it might draw upon them. These enemies themselves would prove less formidable because they would gradually lose the strength which the furnishing of Peru and Mexico with provisions procures them. In a word, Spain, by receiving on India goods the same duties as it receives on those furnished by its rivals, would lose no branch of its revenues. On occasion required, it might even obtain from its colonies succours, which at present they have neither the disposition nor the power of granting. We shall insist no longer on the commerce of Mexico with the East Indies; let us now speak of its connexions with Europe by the North sea, and begin with that formed by the productions of Guatimala.

The province of Guatimala, which is one of the largest of New Spain, was conquered in 1524, and 1525 by Pedro de Alvarado, one of Cortez's lieutenants. He built in it several towns, and in particular the capital which bears the name of the province. It is situated in a valley which is about three miles broad, and bounded by two mountains that are pretty lofty. From the mountain towards the south run several rivulets and fountains, which convey to the villages, that are situated on the declivity, a delicious freshness, and maintain a perpetual succession of flowers and fruits. The aspect of the mountain, to the north, is horrid. There is no verdure ever seen upon it: nothing but ashes, and calcined stones. A kind of noise, which the inhabitants attribute to the boiling of metals in a state of fusion within the caverns of the earth, is heard continually. From these interior furnaces issue flames, and torrents of sulphur, which fill the air with an horrible infection. Guatimala, according to

to the expression of the country, is situated between paradise and hell.

Its situation, and its distance from Mexico and Guadalajara, have occasioned it to be fixed upon for the seat of an audience, which extends its jurisdiction over three hundred leagues to the south, an hundred to the north, sixty to the east, and twelve to the west, towards the South Sea. The advantages it derived from this distinction soon formed it into a considerable colony, and this colony made the most of those gifts which nature had bestowed upon it. There is no country, in this part of the new world, where she hath lavished her blessings with greater profusion. The air is very wholesome, and the climate very temperate. Poultry and game are in the greatest abundance, and of an excellent flavour. No part of the earth produces better corn. The rivers, lakes, and sea, are every where replete with excellent fish. The oxen are here multiplied to such a degree, that it is become necessary to kill all that are grown wild on the mountains, lest they should prejudice agriculture by their excessive numbers.

This fertility, however, is not the circumstance that renders Guatimala so valuable to the metropolis. Spain has properly no connection with this colony, but by means of the indigo she gets from it. This is far superior to what the rest of America produces. In the cultivation of it they employ certain negroes, and a part of those Indians who have survived the tyranny of their conquerors. The labours of these slaves annually furnish, to Europe alone, two thousand five hundred furs, which sell, one with another, at Cadiz, for 1680 livres*. This rich production is conveyed upon mules, with some other articles of less importance, to the town of St Thomas, situated sixty leagues from Guatimala, at the extremity of a very deep lake, which loses itself in the gulf of Honduras. Here these goods always remain to be exchanged for those sent to Europe in vessels of a moderate bulk, which commonly arrive in the months of July or August. Their cargo, in return, consists of some skins, cassia, and sarsaparilla, which is all the trade

that

that the province of Honduras furnishes, though it be an hundred and fifty leagues long, and sixty, or four-score broad. The reputation it had at first acquired, from its golden mines, was but transitory: they sunk into total oblivion, after having proved the grave of nearly a million of Indians. The territory they inhabited remains uncultivated and waste: it is now the poorest part of all America. Both the people and the lands were sacrificed to the search after gold, and even that gold came to nothing.

Guatimala nearly furnishes the whole of those 6,000,000 livres*, which is the amount of its productions, joined to those of Honduras. The lake on which these riches are all accumulated is entirely open, though it would have been very easy to have secured it from every attack, so much the more easily as its entrance is rendered narrow by two high rocks, which project on each side, within canon-shot. In all probability Spain will not alter her conduct, till she has suffered for her negligence.

The vessels that should undertake this expedition, might anchor in perfect safety in the road. A thousand or twelve hundred men, landing at St Thomas, might cross fifteen leagues of the mountains, where they would find commodious roads, and subsistence. The rest of the way would be across plains that are well peopled, and plentiful. They would arrive at Guatimala, which has not a single soldier, nor the least fortification. Its forty thousand souls, Indians, Negroes, Mestees, and Spaniards, who have never seen a sword, would be incapable of the least resistance. In order to save their lives, they would deliver up to the enemy the immense riches that they have been accumulating for two centuries, which would amount at least to thirty millions†. The troops would reembark with this booty; and, if they chose it, with hostages that would insure their retreat. The trade of Campeachy would be exposed to the same invasion, if it were worth the trouble.

Between the gulfs of Campeachy and Honduras, we find a great peninsula, called Jucatan. Though this peninsula has neither river nor brook, the water is every where

* 262,500l. † 1,312,500l.

where so near to the land, and shells are in such vast abundance, that it is evident, that this immense space formerly constituted part of the sea. When the Spaniards discovered it, they found few inhabitants there, little cultivation, and no metals; in consequence of which it was despised. They afterwards found, that the trees which grew there were fit for dying; upon which they built the town of Campeachy, which became the mart of this valuable production, from which it received its name.

If the tree which furnishes the dye were not so thick, it would not be unlike the white thorn. Its leaves are small, and of a pale green. The inside, at first red, becomes black, after the tree has been felled some time. It is only the heart of the tree that gives the black and the violet colour.

Campeachy, in consequence of this single article, became a considerable market. It received every year several vessels, whose cargoes were distributed in the inland countries, and which took in return wood and metals, which this circulation drew thither. This prosperity was continually augmenting, till the time that the English settled at Jamaica.

Amidst the vast numbers of pirates which every day issued from this island, which had now become famous, many of them cruised in the bay of Campeachy, in order to intercept the vessels which came there. These robbers knew so little of the value of the wood, which was the only production of the country, that, when they found barks laden with it, they took away nothing but the iron utensils. One of them having carried off a large vessel which had nothing else but logwood on board, brought it into the Thames, designing only to equip it as a privateer; when, contrary to his expectation, he sold, at a very great price, the wood, of which he had made so little account, that he always burnt it during his voyage. Since this discovery, the pirates who were not successful at sea, never failed to repair to the river of Champeton, where they put on board the piles of wood which were always found ranged along the shore.

The peace of the English with Spain having put a stop

stop to the depredations of these pirates, several of the employed themselves in cutting Indian wood. Cap Catoche furnished them at first with abundance. As soon as they perceived it diminish, they went to settle between Tabasco and the river of Champeton, about lake Triste, and in Beef Island, which is very near it. In 1675, their numbers amounted to two hundred and sixty. Their ardour, which at first was extreme, soon relaxed. The habit of idleness prevailed. As most of them were excellent shooters, the chase became the predominant passion; and their former inclination to plunder was rekindled in them by this exercise. The soon began to make invasions into the Indian towns, the inhabitants of which they carried off. The women they appointed to wait on them, and the men they sold at Jamaica or other islands. The Spaniard, being rouse from his lethargy by these enormities, surprised them in the midst of their debaucheries, and carried them off. Most of them were even taken in their cottages. They were led prisoners to Mexico, where they ended their days in the mines.

Those who escaped took refuge in the gulf of Honduras, where they were joined by some wandering freebooters of North America. In process of time, the increased to fifteen hundred men. The independent and plentiful manner in which they lived, rendered the marshy country they inhabited agreeable to them. Their lives and their provisions were secured by strong intrenchments; and they confined themselves to employments, which their unhappy companions lamented that they had ever neglected. They only took care not to penetrate into the interior part of the country, to cut wood, without being well armed.

Their industry was crowned with the greatest success. In reality, the ton of wood, which had been sold as high as nine hundred livres *, was insensibly fallen to a very low price; but what was lost in the price, was compensated by the greater quantity that was sold. The cutters delivered up the produce of their labours, either to the people of Jamaica, who brought them Madeira wine, strong liquors, linens, cloths; or to the English colo-

nies of North America, which supplied them with provisions. This commerce, which was always carried on by smugglers, and which was the object of so much clamour, was declared to be lawful in 1763. The liberty of cutting wood was secured to Great Britain; but she was not permitted to raise forts, and was even obliged to destroy those which had been built. The court of Madrid seldom hath made any concessions with greater regret than this, of establishing, in the centre of its possessions, an active, powerful, and ambitious nation. But there is a method to render even this concession almost useless.

The province of Jucatan is divided from north-east to south-west, that is, throughout almost its whole extent, by a chain of mountains. To the north of these mountains is the bay of Campeachy, whose dry and thirsty soil produces a wood of singular quality, which is sold at all markets at near double the price of that which the English cut at the southern bay of Honduras, where the rich and almost marshy soil produces only a bastard kind, and which yields much less dye. If, as the expressions of the treaty, which admit of some latitude in their meaning, lead us to apprehend Great Britain hath acquired only the right of settling in those places which its subjects had usurped, Spain may put an end to her uneasiness on this point, by encouraging the cutting of its own wood, which is more valuable; in such a manner as to furnish all Europe with sufficiency for their consumption. By this judicious policy, she will ruin the English colony, and, without using violence, get rid of a neighbour much more dangerous than she imagines; she will then regain an important branch of trade, which, for a long time, hath been so considerably reduced, that Campeachy receives from the mother-country no more than a single vessel every three or four years. What this does not bring away is carried off by small vessels to Vera-Cruz, which is the true point of union between Mexico and Spain.

Old Vera-Cruz served at first for a mart. This town, built and founded by Cortez, on the very spot where he landed, is situated on a river, which is dry one part of the year, but which, in the rainy season, is capable of

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receiving the largest vessels. The danger to which they were exposed, in a situation where nothing defended them against the violence of the winds, so common in these latitudes, induced the seamen to seek for a better shelter, which they found eighteen miles lower down on the same coast. There they built New Vera-Cruz seventy-two leagues distant from the capital of Mexico.

New Vera-Cruz is situated in a climate rendered disagreeable by a burning sun and excessive heats, and unwholesome by the continual rains. Dry sands bound it on the north, and infectious marshes on the west. Its streets are straight, but the houses are built of wood. No nobility are to be met with here, and the merchants always prefer living at Angelos. The small number of Spaniards, who are fixed, either by avarice or by indigence, in this wretched and unwholesome station, live in a privacy, and with a parsimony, that are unknown in all other commercial places.

The fortifications of the town consist of a wall, eight towers erected at certain distances, and two bastions which command the shore. These works, weak in themselves, and ill constructed, are in an extremely ruinous state; so that, for the defence of the place, they depend only on the fortress of St Juan de Ulloa, that is built on a rock, fronting the town, and at the distance of a mile from it.

This harbour has the disadvantage of not being able to hold more than thirty or thirty-five vessels, which are not always sheltered from the northern winds. The only entrance into it is by two canals, which are so narrow as to admit but one ship. The approaches also are rendered dangerous by several small islands, which the Spaniards call Cayos, and by a great number of rocks between wind and water, almost impreceptable. These obstacles, which they deemed insurmountable, except from a perfect knowledge of the spot, acquired after many years experience, having been overcome by certain desperate pirates, who surprised the place in 1712, they erected towers on the shore, where vigilant sentinels continually kept guard for the common safety.

It is into this wretched harbour, which is properly the only one in the gulf, that the fleet, whose destination is

is to furnish Mexico with European merchandize, arrives. It is fitted out at Cadiz, every two, three, or four years, according as occasions and circumstances require. It ordinarily consists of fifteen or twenty merchant ships, and is escorted by two men of war, or a greater number, if requisite.

Wines, brandies, and oils, constitute the most bulky part of the cargo. Gold and silver stuffs, gold and silver lace, cloths, linen, silks, laces, hats, jewels, diamonds, and spices, compose the richest part.

The fleet sets out from Europe in the month of July, but at the latest in the beginning of August, in order to avoid the dangers which it would incur from the violence of the north wind in the open sea, especially at the binding places, if it set sail in any other season. In its passage, it takes in refreshments at Porto Rico, and repairs to Vera-Cruz, from whence its cargo is carried to Xalapa. In this town, which is situated twelve leagues from the harbour, on the back of a mountain, and commodiously built, is held a fair, which is limited, by the laws, to six weeks; but which sometimes is prolonged, at the solicitation of the merchants of the country, or those of Spain. The proportion of metals to merchandize, is what determines the gain or loss of exchanges. If one of these objects is in greater abundance than the other, great prejudice results to the seller or buyer. Formerly, the royal treasure was sent from the capital to Vera-Cruz, to wait the arrival of the fleet there; but since this key of the new world was pillaged by pirates, in 1683, it waits the arrival of the ships, and stops at Angelos, which is only thirty-five leagues distant.

When the business is finished, the gold, silver, cochineal, leather, vanilla, logwood, and some goods of inconsiderable value, which Mexico furnishes, are put on board. The fleet then directs its course for the Havana, where, after being joined by some register ships dispatched to different ports, it arrives at Cadiz, by the channel of Bahama.

In the interval between the one fleet and the other, the court of Spain sends out two men of war, which they call Azogues, to carry to Vera-Cruz the quicksilver

that is necessary for working the mines of Mexico. The quicksilver was originally drawn from Peru; but the commissions were so uncertain, so slow, and so frequently attended with fraud, that, in 1734, it was judged more expedient to send it from Europe. The mines of Guadalcanal at first furnished them with the means. These were afterwards forsaken, for the richer mines of Almeda in Estramadura. The Azogues, to which they sometimes join two or three merchant ships, which can only carry the fruits of Spain, are laden, in return, with the produce of those goods that have been sold since the departure of the fleet, or of those which had been delivered on credit.

If any arrears still remain, they are commonly brought back by the ships of war which Spain builds at the Havana, and which always pass to Vera-Cruz, before they set sail for Europe. Affairs are conducted in a different manner at Peru, as will be shewn in the subsequent book.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

